PREPARING FOR TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESIDENTIAL FACULTY IN COLLEGES IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

by

Daniel Frank Soltis

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Higher Education Administration: Educational Leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. The theory that guided this study was Bandura's social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory defines learning through social contexts like residential faculty experiencing times of uncertainty. The study addressed the question: What are the lived experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty? This qualitative study employed a transcendental phenomenological design to interact virtually with upstate New York residential faculty members of universities or colleges. To participate in the study, individuals must have taught at least one in-class course over the past five years on an upstate New York educational campus. The participants attended interviews, a focus group, and submitted individual reflective letters with recommendations for institutional leaders to review for future times of uncertainty. Data triangulation occurred through coding and discovering themes pertaining to the central research question and sub-research questions across all three data collection methods. Three themes emerged from the data collected, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the departments in times of uncertainty, and the safety concerns of the institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic included three sub-themes: the use of technology, the effects on curriculum, and the student hangover. The role of the departments also included three sub-themes: the re-design of programs, colleague interactions, and overall communication. The theme of the institution's safety concerns contained security and emergency plans as its sub-themes. The themes led to interpretations of administrative practices during times of uncertainty, university collaboration, and university preparedness.

Keywords: preparedness, times of uncertainty, residential faculty, universities, colleges

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Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Times of uncertainty, like the COVID-19 pandemic, occur regularly in education (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020; Marshall & Ward, 2020). These times of uncertainty cause institutions to re-evaluate and change educator practices, preparation, and training (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020; Harris & Sass, 2011; Marshall & Ward, 2020). Administrators and educators adjust to times of change in education to continue educating college students (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al.; Pattison et al., 2021). The research in this study provided descriptive details on the perceptions of educators' preparedness to adjust to times of uncertainty and educational demands from other stakeholders. This chapter explores the background of higher education preparedness during times of uncertainty, specifically in the historical, social, and theoretical contexts. After the theoretical contexts section, the chapter explores the problem and purpose statements that lead to the significance of the study and the research questions. The chapter ends by presenting common terms utilized in this study.

Background

Throughout educational history, there have been directives and instructions from the administrations at levels of education regarding methods and best practices that educators must learn and prepare to employ to educate students in times of uncertainty (Asiyai, 2020; Sathoyaseeland, 2021; Strawser et al., 2020). This chapter examines the historical, social, and theoretical implications of educational experiences with administrative leadership during times of uncertainty. These implications explore the study's framework of the problem of perceived educator underrepresentation and preparedness to adapt to times of uncertainty (Gudmundsdottir

& Hathaway, 2020; Jarvis et al., 2013; Marshall & Ward, 2020). Further, the historical context, social influences, and theoretical examination guide the topic's importance in describing educator preparedness and institutional representation, recognition, and support for their faculty during times of uncertainty and societal demands influencing student education.

Historical Context

In previous centuries, researchers questioned how study subjects learn and respond to situations (Skinner, 1938). This research included best practices to teach students to succeed in their environment through modern behaviorism, operant conditioning techniques, socialization, and conditioning theories in education (Latour, 2005; Novak & Pelaez, 2004; Schlinger, 2021). These theories blended traditional instructivism concepts with constructivism, or the idea that humans create their knowledge as higher-order processing instead of just mimicking their environment (Piaget, 1952; Tracey, 2009). Blending instructivism and constructivism support children's learning from external factors, educators, and internal processes (Cronjé, 2006; Mattar, 2018).

These theoretical models provide a framework for current studies on observing student learning in residential education (Cronjé, 2006). In the 21st century, learning techniques for children studying in different environments have expanded into virtual or online learning, creating the need to understand connections between learning, the environment, and teaching tools in times of uncertainty (Fugere, 2020; Laurillard, 2000). These learning techniques include using modern technology and modernized teaching methods (Fugere, 2020; Laurillard, 2000). Many educators considered this technological learning and used modern tools as supplemental or secondary learning strategies until the COVID-19 pandemic (Marshall & Ward, 2020; Siddiquei & Kathpal, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent times of uncertainty changed the

framework of instructional methods, resulting in students and teachers radically adapting their teaching and learning strategies to new environments through remote learning (Marshall & Ward, 2020; Siddiquei & Kathpal, 2021). Full-remote learning occurred until 2021, when the faculty and students returned to residential facilities, creating another time of uncertainty in education by re-orienting to old environments under changed rules and circumstances (Clark-Gareca & Dull, 2021; Ditta et al., 2023). Understanding the effect and preparation of faculty and the changes to their educational practices throughout society is vital to the future of education and society (Ditta et al., 2023; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). These recent changes in educational practices are significant beyond the historical perspective and are essential to society from a social context.

Social Context

Times of uncertainty in education force institutions to change their faculty preparation methods for student learning (Siddiquei & Kathpal, 2021). Motivational strategies, adapting to new environments, and working with modern technologies are essential to continuing education during uncertain times (Li et al., 2023; Murphy, 2022). Understanding how educators prepare for times of uncertainty and motivate students to succeed is relevant to society because it provides the ability to adapt to the future of education (Li & Eryong, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020). It is essential to understand the roles of leadership in education, educator preparation, and the adaptability of educators during times of uncertainty to prepare for future societal changes.

Those most recent times of uncertainty resulted in communities throughout the country attempting to maintain the highest level of education for students when residential education was impossible, and adaption was vital to allow society to advance (O'Leary et al., 2021). The

pandemic and post-pandemic times of uncertainty caused educators to prepare different education practices to shift to online education. New primary learning methods resulted in mental health changes, preparation concerns, and unknown disruptions in the ability to teach and learn for both students and educators (Kim et al., 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; Pattison et al., 2021; Pressley, 2021; Villanti et al., 2022). Understanding the perspectives of what occurred during times of uncertainty and how educators prepared to transition to different methods of learning provides the next generation of educators with insight into future changes (Bennett, 2021; Bao, 2020; Pandya et al., 2021; Rapanta et al., 2020). Documenting and reflecting on these strategies during the pandemic is valuable for administrators to use to enhance education and learning after these times of uncertainty (Woulfin & Spitzer, 2023).

Theoretical Context

Understanding, learning, and adapting to situations have been prevalent in society since at least the 1930s, with the operant learning theory introduced by Skinner (1938). Operant learning theory is a form of instructivism (Ghiselin, 2018). It is essential to recognize the learning process of individuals based on stimuli and environment to understand the responses to changes made to the environment and interactions (Dewey, 1938). Theorists created experiments on participant learning through environmental stimuli and how living creatures respond and adapt to what they perceive to be true in a new setting (Skinner, 1938). The researcher or experimenter controlled the environment and the stimuli to promote learning, and the subject responded to those directions, even after the researchers changed the experiment (Amory, 2010; Porcaro, 2011).

As Skinner (1938) and other instructivism researchers provided more research on the value of learning between subjects, researchers expanded those early studies into social learning

theory and the use of observations of humans and how they interpret the background to understand their surroundings (Bandura, 1977). The transition from conditioning-based environmental stimuli to including cognitive processing to create the basis of learning and knowledge acquisition allowed modern education theories to expand using new tools.

Within the past 50 years, researchers have studied technology, tools, and home environments as new learning methods (Bower, 2019; Castaneda & Selwny, 2018). One way of learning today, with multiple changes resulting in recent times of uncertainty, is using social learning theory, where personal, behavioral, and environmental factors contribute to student learning and responses (Bandura, 1986). The social cognitive approach aligns with recent changes in culture, society, environment, and students, resulting in different learning methods. Those theories are applicable during current times of uncertainty, where technology is essential for learning and teaching practices changed for educators (Shamburg et al., 2022).

The theory of instructivism, the use of operant conditioning, the behavioral systems approach to child development, and constructivism have all revised their methods due to the times of uncertainty in education with the changing environments and teaching methods (Novak & Pelaez, 2004; Piaget, 1952; Skinner, 1938; Watts & Jofili, 2007). By combining those theories on learning, education, and motivation with Siemen's (2005) connectivism using technology with the framework of Bandura's (1986) cognitive learning theory, it is possible to create a framework to investigate, observe, reflect, and understand how education practices change (Bell, 2009). Education practices, including teacher preparation, administrative leadership, training, and teaching methods, changed during times of uncertainty within residential college settings (Bazirake et al., 2023). This research combines the prior knowledge of the established theories with the unknown educator perspectives on the barriers and concerns of teaching during times of

uncertainty to provide insight into the present and future methods of teaching residential college students.

Problem Statement

The problem was that preparedness for times of uncertainty is underrepresented in residential college planning. The immediacy of response to times of uncertainty requires leadership and an understanding situations that could arise during a crisis (Imad, 2020). Emergencies of all types, including the COVID-19 pandemic, created scenarios that radically altered the structure of residential education for extended periods (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al., 2021; Pattison et al., 2021). The rapidness of this specific time of uncertainty throughout the COVID-19 pandemic also included re-introducing students to traditional education and the challenges educators faced to prepare themselves for attempting to return to accepted residential teaching practices with new policies and procedures (Çebi & Güyer, 2020; Ditta et al., 2023).

As other times of uncertainty arise, educators rely on leadership preparedness, training, and educational redesign based on new and prior knowledge to assist when situations occur that require a change to a residential college setting (Arnett & Waite, 2020; Cho, 2020; Dopson et al., 2018; Schlinger, 2021). Those changes to the residential educators' teaching environments and perspectives during times of uncertainty mean that perceptions of unpreparedness, including training and planning, make performing the duties and tasks of the educator more difficult in educational settings (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al., 2021; Pattison et al., 2021). Understanding residential educators' perspectives in residential settings during times of uncertainty provided helpful information to administrators regarding how their staff perceives their support from leaders during challenging times.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. For the research, preparations for times of uncertainty were defined as phenomena that occur in a society that require change for educators to perform traditionally defined teaching duties in a residential setting (Baranowski, 2017; Rojas & Bernasconi, 2010; Stewart & Seauve-Rantajääskö, 2020). The theory that guided this study was Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was the addition of new and critical qualitative data that contributed to the understanding of residential educators' perspectives on preparedness, including training, leadership, and planning for student learning during uncertain times (Arnett & Waite, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). The study's contribution increased the knowledge base for this topic from theoretical, empirical, and practical perspectives. The theoretical significance was the increased knowledge of providing methods to succeed in education during times of uncertainty. The empirical significance was the connection to other research on educator preparedness, teaching methods, leadership, and training for educators and the evolution of student education. Finally, the practical significance was to provide valuable research and data collection methods to replicate future studies to further analyze the changes to the educational system during times of uncertainty to guide future educators in teaching best practices.

Theoretical

Theoretically, this study examined processes in place for educators to prepare for significant societal changes during times of uncertainty. Administrations will be able to obtain new, detailed, qualitative, and current information regarding educator's perceived preparedness and adaptability to their educational practices in modern society (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al.; Pattison et al., 2021; Retuzel & Fawson, 2021). The information each educator provided to the research, including their perceptions, beliefs, and feelings, will assist administrators by learning how their staff perceived their preparedness in times of uncertainty. There is an ability to further theories on adapting and improving teaching during uncertain times and societal changes, including the use of technology and different learning from different environments (Macgilchrist et al., 2020). The study added knowledge from prior educational theoretical frameworks centering on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

Empirical

Empirically, the lived experiences of residential college educators provided additional evidence using Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory on behaviors during times of uncertainty. Times of uncertainty include violence in residential settings, natural disasters, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Exploring the lived experiences of educators working in residential settings makes new perspectives on times of uncertainty possible (Sharma & Alvi, 2021). Prior research throughout different educational institutions globally supplements the qualitative data primarily on high school and higher education students adapting to the new educational environments (Li & Eryong, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020). Combining further qualitative information on the current phenomenon of perceived preparation

by educators during times of uncertainty with prior research added practical, recent, and relevant information to educator experiences during times of uncertainty.

Practical

Practically, the perceptions of residential educators in college settings provided research on the lived experiences of faculty and educators working in educational environments during times of uncertainty in recent years. The research studied the educators' methods that may result in developing new strategies for teaching and learning (Morano et al., 2021; Rapanta et al., 2020). The educators' experiences with the pandemic, post-pandemic, and other societal events, such as violence in schools and changes in technology, assisted in adding knowledge about administrative leadership, sufficient training for educators, the importance of adapting to modern technology, and teaching during stressful times. The findings of this study provided additional real-life experiences during times of uncertainty by faculty in residential colleges and how their perceptions of preparedness impacted teaching. Additionally, the information from this study will guide administrators when collaborating with their staff in the future.

Research Questions

The research questions described the phenomenon of lived experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty. These research questions focused on the framework of social cognitive theory and the interconnection of perceived factors, including personal, environmental, and behavioral, which combined to create the entire experience and describe human behavior (Bandura, 1986). The central research question was broadly defined to permit detailed responses and specific experiences during times of uncertainty. The sub-questions focused on discovering components of social cognitive theory regarding reactions to times of uncertainty.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question One

What are the expectations for residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question Two

How does the self-efficacy of residential college faculty affect the preparations for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question Three

What are the community access experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Definitions

1. *COVID-19* – A period beginning in 2020 when the World Health Organization determined the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic since it became a public health emergency worldwide (Elsevier LTD, 2020).
2. *Education Redesign* – The transition from traditional single-teacher classrooms to other methods, such as a team-based approach and other innovative methods (Reutzel & Fawson, 2021).
3. *Learning* – Results from regularities in an organism's environment that subsequently change the behavior in those organisms (De Houwer et al., 2013).

4. *Times of Uncertainty* – Phenomena that occur in a society that require educators to change traditional teaching methods in a residential setting (Baranowski, 2017; Rojas & Bernasconi, 2010; Stewart & Seauve-Rantajääskö, 2020).

Summary

The problem was that preparedness for times of uncertainty was underrepresented in residential college planning. This chapter explored the background of higher education preparedness during times of uncertainty, specifically in the historical, social, and theoretical contexts. Next, the problem and purpose statements that led to the significance and developed research questions were explored. The chapter ended by presenting common terms utilized in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A comprehensive literature review was developed to investigate preparedness for times of uncertainty in residential college planning. The literature review chapter discusses current literature, research, and data on times of uncertainty in education, perceptions, and data from administration, educators, and other topics with times of change. The literature review begins with a theoretical framework for understanding actions and perceptions using Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, followed by a historical basis of theories on learning, behavior, and social interactions. Next, the literature review examines the roles of administrative leadership, teacher training, and dealing with times of uncertainty in the past within education. Finally, the literature review concludes with research involving educational changes and teaching practices during recent times of uncertainty, which presents the current need for more research from educators' perspectives on dealing with times of uncertainty today.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for the research on residential colleges' and universities' preparedness, primarily in upstate New York institutions, is Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory focuses on the roles of the social environment and the influences of that environment on people, which then dictates behavior (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The importance of social cognitive theory in education is that it frames behavior and learning by including human beings' internal processes, including self-regulatory processes that educators use to perform their job functions (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). The perspectives of residential college faculty regarding preparedness to succeed in times of uncertainty coincide with the critical factors of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Those critical factors are

cognitive, personal, environmental, and behavioral or self-efficacy factors, essential to learning and responding to the environment and social interactions (Bandura, 1986).

Cognitive Factors in Behavior

When determining human behavior, cognitive or personal factors are considered, as well as internal knowledge, expectations, and attitudes (Bandura, 1986). How residential educators perceive their preparedness and respond to times of certainty partially depends on their internal and external factors. Knowledge is essential for experiences and new learning to provide educators with a foundation to dictate their behavior based on past successes (Cronjé, 2006; Fugere, 2020; Laurillard, 2000). For example, as educators transitioned to remote learning and then back in residential classrooms during and after COVID-19, Bandura's (1986) inclusion of new and past knowledge factored into the adjustments and decisions made by faculty to adapt to new situations (Clark-Gareca & Dull, 2021; Siddiquei & Kathpal, 2021; Verde & Valero, 2021). Combined with knowledge, the expectations and attitudes of the residential faculty complete an overall picture of a situation such as a time of uncertainty to assist in determining behavior with the understanding of environmental factors that occur (Bandura, 1986; Vanlommel et al., 2017).

Environmental Factors in Behavior

Traditionally, the theories behind environment dictating behavior began with Skinner (1938) using instructivism and expanding to human research involving education and social environments in learning institutions (Amory, 2010; Porcaro, 2011; Yin et al., 2019). The social cognitive theory goes beyond observed behavior and accounts for social and environmental factors that contribute to behavior, like community influences in times of uncertainty andsocial normality used in institutional settings to provide guidance. These environmental and social factors contribute to how residential educators would respond given their interactions with others

and combined with the experiences learned cognitively during prior times of uncertainty (Bandura, 1977; Grusec, 1994; Sears, 1975). Behavioral factors then supplement cognitive and environmental factors to fully explain human behavior under the social cognitive theory and how it relates to higher education in residential colleges (Bandura, 1986).

Behavioral Factors in Behaviors

The learning, practice, and skill development processes factor into educators' ability to perform their teaching actions (Bandura, 1986; Siemens, 2004). These behavioral factors help to explain how educators adapt their strategies and techniques to assist the growth of students (Cho, 2020). Their confidence or perceived ability, also known as self-efficacy, provides the educator with their overall preparedness to react in times of uncertainty (Bandura, 1986; Çebi & Güyer, 2020). Educators, and therefore students, perform actions based on educators' behavioral factors and perceived self-efficacy to adapt and lead in uncertain times to continue providing education (Schlinger, 2021). Overall, social cognitive theory combines internal knowledge, perceived abilities, and learning with outside factors in the environment to understand human behavior in situations such as residential educators' perceived preparedness in times of uncertainty (Bandura, 1986).

Related Literature

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) provides a framework for understanding current human behavior in times of uncertainty, including from residential faculty in college institutions in upstate New York. A further review of the related literature provides additional evidence and data combining multiple factors contributing to educators' and other stakeholders' responses, actions, and perceptions during times of uncertainty in education. Those factors include the current strategies employed during times of uncertainty and the role of best practices before and

after the COVID-19 pandemic (Orozco et al., 2023). Additionally, the influence and impact of modern technology in educational settings, the part of the administration and their responses to changes in higher education and training during uncertainty, and the effects of times of uncertainty for educators and students in their educational settings and mental health are all significant (Heitor & Horta, 2016; Hopfenbeck, 2022; Lai et al., 2022).

Educator Strategies in Times of Uncertainty

Residential educator decision-making during times of uncertainty and change requires knowledge, including knowledge of different theories (Bandura, 1976; Vanlommel et al., 2017). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) focuses on how humans behave based on specific factors. Social cognitive theory and connectivism (Bandura, 1986; Siemens, 2005) synthesize internal and external factors applied to new learning. The synthesis of the models in education between student and educator interactions is a new model for understanding learning in times of uncertainty (Almulla & Al-Rahmi, 2023; Bell, 2009). Their relationships to other theories, such as teaching and learning in specific environments and how socialization influences behavior in educators and students, focus on educational approaches for socialization and learning in new environments in today's educational settings (Boitshwarelo, 2011; Davies et al., 2013; Siemens, 2005).

Despite social cognitive theory and connectivism, educators still employ strategies from classical theories, such as instructivism and constructivism, to provide students with the means to succeed today (Novak & Pelaez, 2004; Reich, 2007; Yin et al., 2019). Additional theories, such as newer operant training techniques and student socialization training, also support understanding the relationships between education and physical and social environments (Cho, 2020; McLoughlin et al., 2022; Rank, 2018). A review of the current literature in education

supports the idea that educators use these theories to determine their actions during times of uncertainty through various levels of education, including within residential college settings and institutions. The use of these theories supports the understanding of how educators prepare for times of uncertainty.

Behaviorism Systems Approaches to Student Training

One familiar strategy educators use is adjusting student behavior through interactions and the environment based on the behavioral systems approach (Niwayama, 2020; Novak & Pelaez, 2004). Educators strategize how to learn in times of uncertainty, building knowledge from their intrinsic understanding of behavior systems approach theory (Niwayama, 2020; Novak & Pelaez, 2004). The behavioral systems approach aims to expand on social learning theory to train students to behave and learn in a residential classroom setting (Niwayama, 2020; Novak & Perez, 2004). Students interact with the environment in the classroom or educational setting and respond based on their perceptions and risk and reward factors like operant learning theory (Çebi & Güyer, 2020; Neiman & Loewenstrine, 2014; Schlinger, 2021). Educators use this information as a strategy to assist in student learning.

The behavioral systems approach relies on the environment and student-educator interactions as fundamental learning principles (Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Downes, 2005; Siemens, 2005). The behavioral system approach then combines critical components of connectivism as an overall strategy or method to assist educators in times of uncertainty (Bell, 2009; Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Downes, 2005; Siemens, 2005). As environments change, the interactions between students and their surroundings change, creating situations where some behaviors are unknown and resulting in different relationships with educators and educational settings (Cho, 2020; Mattar, 2018). The traditional models of learning and training now change

with the environment, resulting in educators adapting their current strategies for working with their students, particularly in times of uncertainty in society and education (Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Tracey, 2009).

Some examples of using this strategy occurred during recent times of uncertainty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, two significant times of uncertainty in education involve moving to fully remote learning and returning to residential classroom college settings (Murphy, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). The strategic planning and preparedness of education in residential learning environments changed when the schools resorted to online learning with students in their own homes and then returning to campus settings and institutions with new health and mental health components (Falqueto et al., 2019; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). According to the behavioral systems approach, this will alter how students fundamentally learn because the stimuli in their environment, including the physical setting and their interactions with educators, change multiple times during these times of uncertainty (Munobwa et al., 2022; Novak & Pelaez, 2004). The result is that the elements influencing learning strategies by educators changed during the pandemic, creating the need for residential faculty to develop new training techniques to teach the same material to students receiving different environmental stimuli (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). These environmental and behavioral strategies are examples of the social cognitive theory that residential faculty at institutions use to react to times of uncertainty (Almulla & Al-Rahmi, 2023; Bandura, 1986). Operant learning or conditioning is another theory for student training that conforms to some concepts in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; Skinner, 1938).

Operant Training Approaches to Student Training

Considering social cognitive theory, times of uncertainty elicit behaviors based on critical factors like social interactions and the environment (Bandura, 1986). Built into social cognitive

theory is using behaviors by both a student and others around the student to promote learning, which is called conditioning (Bandura, 1986; Leeder, 2022). Behavioral conditioning is the response to situations or stimuli based on learned knowledge, and it occurs in educational settings today for residential faculty (Lousa & Lousa, 2022). One aspect of behavioral conditioning is operant conditioning (Skinner, 1938). Due to the value of operant conditioning, educators still apply those classical learning techniques through a humanistic approach that centers on training from leadership, educational environments, and changes over time within institutional settings such as colleges and universities (George & Sanders, 2017; Goldie, 2016; O'Leary et al., 2021). How educator interactions and school settings influence learning with students involves operant training techniques, a foundation of strategies educators apply using classical theories such as instructivism (Porcaro, 2011; Skinner, 1938; Yin et al., 2019).

The purpose of operant training for both educators performing their actions and behaviors and student learning is to include strategies within interactions between educators in classroom settings focusing on direct positive and negative reinforcement (Fu, 2023; Schlinger, 2021). Reinforcement occurs through direct interaction, the use of tools and technology, grading systems, specific seating arrangements, and other variables used both in the environment and through the educational materials for the students (Taylor et al., 2017). These types of reinforcements in a residential, educational setting factor into student conditioning to learn curriculum and behaviors in social settings, much like Skinner (1938) began by altering reinforcement for animals in laboratory settings (Schlinger, 2021). Expanding on strategies employed in operant conditioning with animals (Skinner, 1938), educators use training techniques learned through experiences like prior times of uncertainty and create specific

methods to condition or train students at all grade levels to succeed in education (Rieker & Apanovitch-Leites, 2021).

As environmental factors of education institutions change, including the use of technology, students' attitudes and needs, and society's demands in such times of uncertainty, educators learn and develop different rewards and punishments to influence behavior to enhance student learning (Maun et al., 2023). These coincide with other social cognitive theory factors to explain current strategies for educators today during times of uncertainty (Bandura, 1986; Maun et al., 2023). The idea of using social cognitive approaches for student learning in residential educational settings provides some understanding of perceived perceptions and responses by educators as times change throughout society.

Socialization as Learning Approaches for Student Training

Socialization is a critical component of social learning theory, social cognitive theory, and connectivism (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986; Bell, 2009; Parsons & Platt, 1970; Siemens, 2005). In practice, students learn through interactions with educators and other students, otherwise considered actors and networks of individuals (Latour, 2005; Richardson & Radloff, 2013; Xiao et al., 2023). Likewise, educators learn from their socialization and adapt their behaviors to assist student learning (Bandura, 1986; Hargreaves, 2000). The actors in different portions of society, including educators in residential education settings, create learning environments that help train others to react in social settings (Richardson & Radloff, 2013; Schlinger, 2021). Learning occurs not only from the environment but also through interactions with the educators and students in the environment (Richardson & Radloff, 2013; Schlinger, 2021).

Today's societal changes, because of times of uncertainty and the need to continue education, altered interactions between students and educators, and socialization has expanded to using media and other platforms to enhance training (Marshall & Ward, 2020; Xiao et al., 2023). Both the educators' means of interaction with peers, administration, and students within their environment required strategy changes to assist in student learning. Additionally, the need for educators to adapt to changes to deal with times of uncertainty using social cognitive theory provides proven methods of teaching that assist educators when there is perceived limited or no preparedness from their institutions (Bandura, 1986; Jenkins, 2020).

Educators' approaches to interacting and socializing with the students became vastly different with modern technology and forced isolation due to societal changes and the COVID-19 pandemic, causing educators to seek new methods to reach their students (Harper, 2017; Marshall & Ward, 2020). These changes became most noticeable during the past decade with societal issues due to health and safety concerns from the outside environment invading residential facilities (Sason & Kellerman, 2021; Sutin, 2022). Even after the pandemic, the educators still had to use this technology. Still, socialization and training then reverted into a hybrid virtual and face-to-face interaction environment, resulting in another time of uncertainty and causing the need for educators and administrators to reconsider old strategies and how to prepare students returning to residential environments with face-to-face interactions with new restrictions (Clark-Gareca & Dull, 2021; Sun et al., 2022). Since interactions with students have changed, motivational strategies to keep the students engaged while learning in different and unknown environments became a concern regarding preparing new strategies during times of uncertainty.

Motivational Strategies for Student Learning and Conditioning

Students' motivation is a primary factor in educator preparation, and the use of conditioning behavior dates to operant learning theory (Skinner, 1938; Wang et al., 2022). If the subject or participant in operant learning theory receives no motivation, it is more difficult for learning to occur (Siemens, 2005; Skinner, 1938). Motivation is a significant contributing factor to both attention and desire to learn at all levels of education, including higher education in residential settings involving multiple course requirements and independent assignments (Lousa & Lousa, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Understanding the motivation for learning and what are of interest to students was a research topic for Skinner (1938) and Bandura (1977). Social learning theory then became social cognitive theory, and educators use the understanding of conditioning based on known experiences to motivate their students today (Bandura, 1986; Chang et al., 2014; Day et al., 2020).

The transition of understanding how stimulants, such as interactions and the environment, motivate people both positively and negatively connects humans' learning processes and behaviors (Komarraju et al., 2010; O'Brennan et al., 2014). Students require motivation from educators and their educational environment to assist in their attention and learning (Çebi & Güyer, 2020; Korur & Erilmaz, 2018). Educators during a transition in a time of uncertainty, like remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, must assess their teaching strategies and adapt to continue to motivate students beyond their traditional methods in the classrooms (Bharti et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). The educators' strategies depend on their prior knowledge and student motivation experience, resulting from operant learning and social cognitive theories (Bandura, 1986; Skinner, 1938). Depending on the student's current level of education, those strategies must change and adapt to provide optimal learning experiences.

Understanding the motivation strategies of educators for all ages of students offers different perspectives on preparedness, which is useful even for faculty in residential institutions.

Motivational Strategies for Elementary Student Learning

Elementary school students need practical approaches to motivate learning and behaviors, requiring educators at that level to prepare strategies and receive training on best practices for working with young children (Dwi Kurino & Cahyaningsih., 2020; Fagell, 2022; Larimore, 2020). For younger children or students in grade school, more direct and firsthand teaching increases learning motivation and keeps students interested throughout the school year (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019). It is difficult to rely solely on younger students to self-motivate in a mandatory school rather than a voluntary residential higher education environment (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019). Educators motivate young students through practical methods, including operant learning and social learning theories combined with the repetition of activities by educators utilizing educational, environmental stimuli, and direct social contact (Bandura, 1977; Prewitt, 2019; Skinner, 1938).

Elementary students learn from motivating stimuli in their environment, and that environment contains different criteria to complete other school subjects (Dwi Kurino & Cahyaningsih, 2020). Those programs based on specific criteria for courses like mathematics follow basic approaches to instructing young students and operate from traditional theories, including positive reinforcement as motivation for good behavior and learning (Dwi Kurino & Cahyaningsih, 2020; Skinner, 1938). The techniques educators prepare for, train, and apply to younger children must be realistic to their learning capabilities, and those are reflected by individual educators presenting knowledge through the training and experience of working with a specific age group of students (Abas, 2021; Gawronski, 2021; Yin et al., 2019). Educators must

Also recognize that as students advance through elementary school, their motivation changes with age. Educators must adapt strategies and receive additional training and support to continue providing the best learning methods in different environments and with learned knowledge (Bandura, 1986; Morano et al., 2021; Skinner, 1938). Understanding students' motivation differences based on age provides insight for educators as they instruct older students in residential universities.

Motivational Strategies for Post-Elementary Student Learning

Faculty in residential institutions do not always work with elementary students and have different knowledge regarding motivation strategies for post-secondary students (Lixiang et al., 2021). As students advance beyond elementary school, their motivation depends on other factors (Alt, 2015). Using conditioning behavior in elementary students may not apply to older college students (Alt, 2015). College students volunteer to enroll in higher institutions, and it is assumed that those students have means of self-motivation and different criteria to provide incentives for them to engage in both the curriculum and the educational environment (Cheng & Ickes, 2009; Li et al., 2023; Wolters & Benzon, 2013). Those differences, including other varying factors, have support from prior research because the research suggests that post-secondary students find self-motivation techniques or learning from their environment, something faculty of residential institutions should understand (Sugumlu et al., 2019; Wolters & Benzon, 2013). Residential faculty then use strategies to foster self-motivation in students and prepare differently using their knowledge and experience with older students (Kitchen, 2021).

Educators are essential to the institutional environment within residential classroom settings, even if the students are self-motivated (Sugumlu et al., 2019; Wolters & Benzon, 2013). Because some self-motivation techniques arise from that environment by the students, it creates

opportunities for residential faculty to use social cognitive theory to advance their educational knowledge (Bandura, 1986; Russell et al., 2019). This use of first social learning theory and later social cognitive theory with older students translates across society and into literature involving changes to teaching and motivation during times of uncertainty (Agung et al., 2020; Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986). As students move from elementary and high school settings to a college curriculum and less structured settings, what motivates those college students to continue their education is different from younger students, causing educators to be knowledgeable about what is essential to the students (Lixiang et al., 2021). Specifically, the need for self-motivation and achievements in college supersede the need to complete elementary and high school education, which students require motivation to finish due to society and family demands (Lixiang et al., 2021). During times of uncertainty, changes in criteria and environment result in students of all ages responding to different motivation techniques and education practices from faculty and educators (Kurubacak, 2007). The educators use their knowledge of these theories to prepare their classroom practices.

Educator Responses and Change Practices During Times of Uncertainty

The COVID-19 pandemic is one example of a time of uncertainty in education that fundamentally altered the educational practices in schools and universities (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest and one of the most recent times of uncertainty in education. The research before the pandemic contained other times of uncertainty but supported slower, incremental changes to educational practices (Forzani, 2014). The slower transition through times of uncertainty before the COVID-19 pandemic allotted time for educators and administrators to prepare, plan, and train faculty (Forzani, 2014). One example of a slower time of change was the use of technology in education (Arnett & Waite, 2020). As

technology evolved from generation to generation of students and educators, administrators could adjust to times of uncertainty with careful planning, training, and education for the faculty (Hales et al., 2018; Arnett & Waite, 2020).

Beyond technological advances, pre-pandemic educational practice revisions and redesigns occurred with additional preparedness training of educators and time to assess new curricula and alter environments (Hales et al., 2018). The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic created a global time of uncertainty without administrators having the capability and time to plan for changes, showing perceived unpreparedness by institutions and administrations when it came to training and planning for educators to respond to this time of uncertainty (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic return to residential education required educators to implement new practices using modern technology to transition students to complete remote learning without the time they had previously, expediting the need to re-adjust faculty practices in both schools and universities and to re-assess future best practices (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Harris & Jones, 2020). Therefore, the application process by educators regarding educational practices changed during recent times of uncertainty, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the practices of educators before and after the pandemic provides further examples of educators perceived to be unprepared during times of uncertainty from administration in residential institutions.

Education Practices Before the COVID-19 Pandemic

Most research on traditional educational best practices occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic during other times of uncertainty (Anagnsotopoulos et al., 2017; Laurillard, 2000). Residential faculty in colleges had time to gain knowledge from administrators before the change (Arnett & Waite, 2020; Hales et al., 2018). The training was available to advance modern

technology to use in the classrooms, and those educators using the training did not have to resort to quick transitions, and preparedness for change was more certain (Fraile et al., 2018; Rust, 2018). The perception of educator preparedness through representation from the administration was different due to the ability to train and transition staff and faculty over periods of time.

The research by Arnett and Waite (2020) provided a road map for the fundamental redesign of best practices with modern technologies and faculty education plans to help schools adapt to societal changes. Unfortunately, this was before the rapid, unplanned situation of shutting down schools and reintroducing students to face-to-face learning. This roadmap included specific guidelines institutions could employ to systematically redesign curriculum to adhere to new standards imposed through legislation and the demands of societal requirements for students at all levels to adapt to the cultural environment (Arnott & Waite, 2020; Harvey et al., 2010). The overall process included transitioning to learning environments that coincided with current technologies while redesigning the curriculum to support those changes through time, planning, training, and adaptability as needed to improve student education (Hargreaves, 2011).

Educational practices by educators in times of uncertainty before the COVID-19 pandemic remained viable for most situations, like tragedies in a specific setting or missing periods due to weather or other short disruptions to the overall educational institution. (Anagnsotopoulos et al., 2017; Laurillard, 2000). Rare situational changes, such as a flood or violence in a school setting, did cause an immediate reaction. However, administrations could assess the situation once it ended and prepare and amend education practices in case other similar situations occur (Boyd et al., 2009). Educators then had time to prepare for those systemic changes, newly defined rules, and better methods to ensure student achievement (Boyd

et al., 2009). Educators could still prepare for times of uncertainty despite the occurrence of additional episodic times of uncertainty occurring for shorter periods in the overall educational process with similar features to those that occurred previously (Boyd et al., 2009; Hypes, 2007). Those systems to deal with tragedies in individual communities and specific conditions were stable until the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in research to shift focus to learning how educators adapted to long-term best practice changes with limited time and resources (Landmark et al., 2010; Hopfenbeck, 2022).

Education Practices During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Fortunately, as a few years have passed since the return to classroom teaching after the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been some recent studies about teaching strategies, student motivation, and educational leadership since the pandemic began that provide insight into adjusting best practices during times of uncertainty (Benner, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Harris & Jones, 2020; Imad, 2020; Pitzalis & Spano, 2021). Comprehensive research on some changes and adaptations provides general best practices going forward, including educational globalization and quantitative perceptions of those changes in other countries (Courtois & Veiga, 2019; Li & Eryong, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020). The requirement of institutional settings to rely on communication technologies expanded the classroom beyond local environments to include the ability for global education sharing and practices (Courtois & Veiga, 2019; Kumar, 2022; Majewska, 2023). Educators took advantage of the ability to interact through social media and interactive chatrooms to build curricula that included learning from others outside of specific institutional settings (Kumar, 2022; Na-iem, 2022). Those studies, combined with current leadership strategies, additional teacher and student data during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the influence of technology usage, all provide some

insight into the educational environment from 2019 to the present (Crompton et al., 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020; Imad, 2020; Malkawi & Khayrullina, 2021). This and future research on teacher strategies after the pandemic will provide educators with examples of new best practices to address the underrepresentation of faculty to prepare for future times of uncertainty (Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Na-iem, 2022).

Additional research shows that educators have now adopted strategies during the pandemic to use as educational practices for other times of uncertainty (Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Imad, 2020). For example, institutions would have to shut down during threats to health and safety, and there was no method to fully recover the lost learning time for the students (Kumar, 2022; Malkawi & Khayrullina, 2021). After the COVID-19 pandemic, most institutions maintained the ability to educate remotely even when the ability to return to residential settings was made possible after the safety concern subsided (Bazirake et al., 2023; Liasidou, 2022). Therefore, when other uncertain situations occur, lost time for student learning during a shutdown does not have to occur (Klinenberg & Startz, 2022). If another widespread pandemic becomes a threat, the educational practices used during the COVID-19 pandemic allow for a quick transition back to remote learning (Ditta et al., 2023).

The new educational practices after the COVID-19 pandemic also provide options for residential settings to go remote for reasons beyond the threat of future global incidents (Ditta et al., 2023; Liasidou, 2022). Institutions were not prepared to prevent loss of educational time due to times of uncertainty, such as inclement weather, an isolated threat in a specific community, or a regional problem that previously resulted in shutting down buildings and halting curriculum teaching (Na-iem, 2022). There are more options for educators to continue education and provide

information and knowledge to students without the fear of losing substantial time in times of uncertainty (Kumar, 2022).

Beyond teaching virtually, other educational practices beyond remote education also changed after the COVID-19 pandemic (Murphy, 2022). Environmental changes have occurred, including classroom seating arrangements and increased health protocols inside institutions (Buda & Czekman, 2021; Sutin, 2022). Seating has been spread out in some institutions, resulting in smaller classroom environments and different practices for working individually with students (Newberry & Hinchcliff, 2022). Some institutions now have specific practices for educators when engaging students to promote healthy contact and interactions (Mackie et al., 2022; Newberry & Hinchcliff, 2022).

Changes to health protocols have also altered the best practices in the classroom environment besides seating (Murphy, 2022). Initially, after the COVID-19 pandemic, those practices included masks and minimal contact (Mackie et al., 2022). Those practices are not intact at the time of this study, but there is increased consciousness about the number of students in small spaces, social cleanliness, and overall sanitation improvements (Shushanik & Lilit, 2023; Van der Westhuizen & Hlatshwayo, 2023). Most of those concerns did not occur universally before the COVID-19 pandemic. Some institutions have changed practices to illness policies, screening for sick students and teachers, and the ability to combine classes virtually if staffing is short due to illness. Those educational practice changes post the COVID-19 pandemic allow us to adjust to some future times of uncertainty, but the most critical changes remain the expansion of technology in institutional settings (Mackie et al., 2022; Shushanik & Lilit, 2023; Van der Westhuizen & Hlatshwayo, 2023). Technology is not only a tool in education but also provides new avenues for faculty preparedness during times of uncertainty.

Technology in Education to Supplement Education Strategies and Best Practices

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the reliance on technology, but the inclusion of new equipment, programs, and games in educational settings has occurred for decades (Amory, 2010; Hainey et al., 2016; Wang, 2022). Specifically, technology in education has increased in the past few decades (Amory, 2010; Costa et al., 2019). The use of computers, games, social media, and other devices provides supplemental education to traditional faculty-student interactions and the use of books and paper as primary educational tools (Agung et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2019; Hainey et al., 2016; Oliver, 2013). The increase in technology usage has expanded further over the past half-decade, creating theories on the use of devices inside and outside the classroom as educational tools, as has research on the practices of technology used by teachers and educators (Bernacki et al., 2020; Fugere, 2020). Since recent times of uncertainty, the result has been further technology usage in education (Hennelly & Ctoria, 2022).

The comprehensive review on this topic provides the ability to compare changes and perspectives about the importance of learning using devices and other techniques and the influences on the preparations of faculty in times of uncertainty (Beardsley et al., 2021; Citrohn & Svensson, 2022; Lee et al., 2020; Tekinarian et al., 2015). Many of the studies occurring involve perceptions from students instead of teachers primarily focused on the use of internet technology but still provide some pertinent perspectives about how technology works with education and learning (Agung et al., 2020; Lixiang et al., 2021; Tekinarian et al., 2015; Williamson & Muckle, 2017). The practical applications of internet technology, including remote education, have value, but understanding how students learn and perceive modern technology is also crucial to adapting educational practices in the future (Malkawi & Khayrullina, 2021). The perceptions of the value of modern technology add to the information

regarding the overall influence of technology within the educational system, combined with methods of faculty preparedness examples and the use of connectivism and social cognitive theory with interactions between human and non-human learning tools (Bandura, 1986; Cunningham & Menter, 2020; Kumar, 2022; Siemens, 2005).

Influence of Technology on Student Learning

Technology use, particularly computer-based programs and virtual meeting sites, became essential educational tools because of societal changes (Bernacki et al., 2020; Hennelly & Ctoria, 2022; Rapanta et al., 2020; Siddiqui & Kathpal, 2021). Previously, these technological tools, such as virtual meeting programs, were used minimally or as complementary learning tools to in-person contact between educators and students (Costa et al., 2019). Technology usage before the pandemic supported the theory of technology-mediated learning tools having value to traditional teaching methods as supplemental education and can be valuable tools in both operant and social learning today (Bower, 2019; Donnelly, 2017). Only since the COVID-19 pandemic did technology become the primary means of learning for multiple years until the return to institutional settings (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2023).

Various types of technology influence students differently, depending on the students' interactions and perceptions of their environment, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the environment was typically the students' home instead of the school environment (Castaneda & Selwyn, 2018; Siddiqui & Kathpal, 2021). The conversion of traditional classroom learning to digital learning shows that it is possible to use technology to instruct students by changing strategies by educators (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). The effects of the transition to technology-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are not entirely known. Still, projections expect that the time during the pandemic and the return to school using modern

technology will influence learning and students' physical, mental, and emotional health (Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020).

Additional research provides early insight that while the overall curriculum was conveyed through virtual classrooms, it is not clear that students retain that information with the same level of success as in an institutional setting (Kim et al., 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). The change from direct contact with educators, the ability to learn from the classroom environment, and the lack of communication and collaboration between students sitting at adjacent tables or desks may not provide the same knowledge retainment (Kim et al., 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). Understanding and expanding on that research coincides with using current research to determine what educational strategies of employing technology yet maintaining the ability to educate inside educational institutions may be most beneficial moving forward in education to provide preparedness for educators working throughout multiple environments.

Technology Practices in Education

Learning research and education practices using technologies of their time have been around for over a century and provided valuable insight into current education and the advancement of technology (Skinner, 1938). During his research on operant learning, Skinner (1938) used technology to create experiments to study learning and behaviors through responses to stimuli, which applies to conditioning students in educational situations. Social learning theory by Bandura (1977) continued research using the technology of that period to expand educational research and transition into social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; Donnelly, 2017).

As society has developed more advanced technology, research has supported technology as essential in residential classroom education settings (Rank, 2018; Siemens, 2005). Until the past decade, the usage practices for technology were supplemental and added to the motivation

and learning of subjects in the classrooms (Oliver, 2013). Teachers and educators began using games, social media, and virtual learning programs to teach and motivate students (Bernacki et al., 2020; Hainey et al., 2016). These changes in learning strategies have succeeded because of the risk-reward methods of gaming, like operant learning, and the social acceptance of technology as a daily way of living, supported by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; Chen & Tu., 2021).

Research from the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent times of uncertainty supports students' educational value and success by incorporating technology into learning through multiple methods and practices (Fugere, 2020). The transition from technology as supplemental learning to creating virtual classrooms and educational settings as primary teaching environments for education caused residential educators to re-design their teaching strategies to increase their knowledge and involvement in new technological tools (Kumar, 2022; Shamburg et al., 2022).

Following the initial year of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and students began to return to residential education settings. Despite the return to residential institutions, research projects that educators will continue to incorporate new and learned technology practices, but the extent of the usage of the technological tools is still unknown (Buda & Czekman, 2021; Rieker & Apanovitch-Leites, 2021). The literature supports the value of continuing the increased practices of residential education regarding technology usage in institutional settings. However, educators’ reliance on those tools will need to adjust when using technology as a primary educational practice because it is not practical for all students (Newberry & Hinchcliff, 2022; Tomasik et al., 2020; Van der Westhuizen et al., 2023). Therefore, educators and administrators should consider a balance between standard residential educational practices inside institutional

settings and technology involving remote learning and other methods of contact in different environments to maximize student learning using all available practices, tools, and strategies (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Van der Westhuizen et al., 2023). Creating a balance of using technology supports the importance of faculty preparation in times of uncertainty.

Administration's Involvement in Preparing for Times of Uncertainty

Administrators, school boards, and other leadership units of schools and universities provide educators with rules, guidance, and instructions on managing times of uncertainty (Henning et al., 2022; Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Smith & Fairbrother, 2021). The administration's involvement in times of uncertainty includes all levels of education, including residential institutions and their faculty (Harris & Jones, 2020; Imad, 2020). Administrative units and leaders go beyond approving and securing financial support for institutions by providing educators and faculty leadership, including offering advice and guidelines on best practices, safety regulations, and training new and experienced educators (Henning et al., 2022; Palumbo & Manna, 2019; Smith & Fairbrother, 2021). Research shows that administrative involvement in leading and providing guidance during previous times of uncertainty differs based on multiple variables (Daoud et al., 2022; Smith & Fairbrother, 2021). Those variables that resulted in different administrative responses to educators in times of uncertainty include residential and institutional locations, inconsistent leadership, knowledge of administrators to provide educators dealing with specific uncertain times, and other variables regarding the specific personnel involved in the core administrative units (Daoud et al., 2022; Harris & Jones, 2020; Imad, 2020;). Those variations of administration units influence educators' perceptions regarding their preparedness to make decisions and react during changes and continue to educate students in residential and institutional settings. Without administrative involvement during times of

uncertainty, the risk of underrepresentation of faculty in residential college settings increases. Therefore, a review of education administrations and their involvement in education practices, safety, and training is discussed below.

Administration and Education Practices

Most residential institutions, like colleges and universities, have established basic educational practices for their faculty (Kater et al., 2022; Palumbo & Manna, 2019). The educational practices at institutions include written and defined academic standards and detailed rules and procedures for faculty to use when following the curriculum created and designed by administrations (Klinenberg & Startz, 2022; Palumbo & Manna, 2019;). Institutions of higher learning require specific criteria provided by the government in the United States, and the administrators develop curricula to meet those criteria (Palumbo & Manna, 2019).

Research on the topic of administrative leadership provides data that, while administrative units in higher institutions of learning are substantially involved in the education practices within universities and colleges to meet the requirements of the government, there is less communication and leadership between administrators and faculty preparing for uncertain times at the resident classroom level (Asiyai, 2020; Strawser & Looney, 2021). Times of uncertainty occur with little warning and preparedness, resulting in faculty adjusting their practices without sufficient time to plan and revise education practices to meet the demands of the criteria imposed by the government agencies, yet perceived leadership and pre-planning on how to faculty implement those changes is lacking from an administrative leadership level, even beyond the United States (Asiyai, 2020; Strawser & Looney, 2021). Fortunately, the administration takes safety regulations seriously, even during times of uncertainty, because of the laws and regulations dictated by local and federal governments (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016).

Administration and Safety Regulations

Residential faculty preparedness for times of uncertainty includes the basic need to ensure safety if there are threats of danger or harm to the educators and the students within the classrooms (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016). Institutional safety measures include illness, tragedies, violence, and other scenarios, such as natural disasters and hazards on campus (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016). The need for safe educational institutions means administrators and school boards invest in providing safety measures during times of uncertainty (Simpeh & Akinlolu, 2021).

Research supports that when a threat to the safety of students or educators presents itself to an institution, the administration's role increases until safety practices are deemed acceptable to prevent any harm or damage to individuals or the educational environment (Simpeh & Solomon, 2020). There is an increase in the need for administrative response time and reaction to situations when safety is a primary concern during a time of uncertainty, such as school violence or hazards (Johnson, 2019; Minister, 2017). These times of uncertainty have defined rules and regulations. Institutions do not underrepresent them, whereas other situations, like the COVID-19 pandemic, do not have specific guidelines and training for educators to proceed with teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020).

Administration and Training for Educators for Times of Uncertainty

Like educational practices in times of uncertainty for residential faculty and educators, research does not support a consistent, universal method for administrators to train and prepare staff when institutions experience unpredictable changes (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). Administrations do have some guidelines in place for safety and protection, as previously discussed. Still, when something unexpected like widespread illness occurs, preparation and

training for residential educators is not a widespread practice. For example, the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic did not have consistent instructions or training for residential educators on adjusting to technology, preparing to change environments, and how to address completing curriculum with different grading methods and limited ability to communicate with students (Asiyai, 2020; Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020).

Institutions and administrators primarily train residential educators during the first few years of hiring those faculty as new employees (Harris & Sass, 2011; Lorente-Echeverria et al., 2022; Srinivasacharlu, 2019). The training the residential faculty receives typically includes promoting student achievement, meeting the institution's expectations, completing course requirements, and agreeing to the rules and regulations of the administration (Harris & Sass, 2011; Lorente-Echeverria et al., 2022; Srinivasacharlu, 2019). The initial training prepares residential faculty to adjust teaching methods and adapt to changes during times of uncertainty (Asiyai, 2020). After the initial educator training period by the institution, there is little additional training for faculty, causing feelings of unpreparedness by educators regarding adjusting and changing their methods during times of uncertainty (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020).

In times of uncertainty, residential educators make decisions and problem-solve with little support from administrators at the institutions (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). While training for every situation is impossible, evidence supports that administrators who promote and utilize communication between administration and educators are beneficial (Flores et al., 2017). That communication between administration and educators will create relationships that will address residential faculty’s concerns of unpreparedness through training and build ongoing open relationships to work through times of uncertainty (Flores et al., 2017).

The initial new hire training for residential faculty provides a framework for educator behavior and preparedness that aligns with social cognitive theory and modern theories like connection (Bandura, 1986; Siemens, 2005). The interactions, discussions, and general communication between administration and their staff during the training give some general preparedness towards certain times of uncertainty (Siemens, 2005). The training also includes conditioning components from older theories, including rewards for motivation and learning, to assist educators in understanding their roles in creating learning environments to help students succeed in many situations (Skinner, 1938).

Research from Harris and Sass (2011) found that while initial training is valuable, the lived experiences after training provide the best knowledge acquisition and training for the residential education of younger students. The initial training, combined with new knowledge from experience in residential facilities and the addition of educator support and praise from administrators, creates the best support system for faculty to develop successful strategies (Asiyai, 2020). This pattern of training and working with residential faculty does not prepare the educators for all times of uncertainty. However, it shows leadership support towards decision-making in inconvenient situations and improving the quality and consistency of student education (Asiyai, 2020; Corbett & Spinello, 2020). Overall, the role of educator training by administrations is valuable knowledge in understanding perceptions of representation for preparedness by faculty during times of uncertainty.

Leadership in Education During Times of Uncertainty

Leadership in education goes beyond just administration. Within residential education facilities, strong leadership from multiple levels of faculty is needed to assist educators when preparing for times of uncertainty (Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Woulfin & Spitzer, 2023). Like

technology evolving through societal advancement, leadership strategies continue to adjust to educator training and dealing with changes in residential environments as new data on student successes becomes available (Imad, 2020; Jarvis et al., 2013). Educational leaders base their current leadership strategies on prior knowledge and influence the actions of the leaders to utilize new knowledge and techniques in residential facilities (Bandura, 1986; Crompton et al., 2021).

Throughout the most recent decades, there has been dedicated support for new leadership models to support overall faculty development and curriculum redesigns to ensure better learning environments at elementary and secondary institutions (Dopson et al., 2018; Laurillard, 2000). The demands of societal changes, including learning essential job functions using technology, working within new environments, and adapting to different responsibilities of professionals, meant that leadership had to continually assess and revise curriculum through the decades (Dopson et al., 2018; Na-iem, 2022). The recent COVID-19 pandemic expedited the need for new knowledge acquisition and presented leaders in the educational field with an opportunity to implement further training and operational strategies to prepare for continued education that meets the needs of society in times of uncertainty (Marshall & Ward, 2020).

One purpose of leadership training throughout all facets of a residential institution is to prepare administrators, educators, and students to adapt to the changes that occur during times of uncertainty while adjusting to new educational environments (Asiyai, 2020; Rincones et al., 2021). Regardless of the reason for the change, the institutions and the administration are responsible for ensuring educators have the most current educational practices and training to adapt when needed in a classroom setting (Harris & Sass, 2011). Besides new academic environments, leadership assists in creating new teaching methods and allows for better strategies to assist residential education in improving the quality of education for students

(Asiyai, 2020; Duong et al., 2019). Progressive leadership in institutions requires educational administrations to consider modern leadership theories from other avenues, such as transformational leadership (Sathiyaseelan, 2021).

Transformational leadership focuses on team building, working together, and communication regardless of title to share knowledge and assist educators in choosing the best actions during times of uncertainty (Sathiyaseelan, 2021). The framework of transformational leadership includes the components of social cognitive theory and the interaction of multiple relationships from connectivism to develop educational leadership models that focus on collaborating relationships (Bandura, 1986; Corbett & Spinello, 2020). Strong relationships between leaders in institutions and faculty create preparedness in educators and allow for constant revisions of strategies in residential settings, like incorporating technology during times of uncertainty (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). When a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic occurs, transformational leadership already has relationships between leaders and educators to communicate and adapt quickly because of the team mentality and understanding that everyone is working together (Sathiyaseelan, 2021). Therefore, when new times of uncertainty do occur, institutions that employ strong leadership networks use can adapt to whatever methods are the most effective to assist students and faculty to continue education and resolve any problems and emergencies that arise from changes in society (Brennan & Stern, 2017; Bagwell, 2019). Beyond the roles of administration and the importance of leadership during times of uncertainty, reviewing the research that includes actual faculty perspectives in specific times of uncertainty provides some concerns with underrepresentation in colleges and universities.

Faculty Experiences During Times of Uncertainty

Educators must work with students during various times of uncertainty. Those times of uncertainty result in educators adjusting their professional and personal lives to prepare for achieving the goals set forth by administrators and governments. The literature review provides current perspectives on some of the adjustments that influence educators today as new times of uncertainty occur. Specifically, the research includes the perspectives of educators in times of uncertainty and how they adapted independently to continue educating students.

Educators' Strategies Development During Times of Uncertainty

The use of strategies for teaching is educational planning and preparation by teachers to understand approaches to increase learning for children in each society (Baylor & Kitsantas, 2005). Recent evidence shows that students have adapted their learning methods during times of uncertainty and that teachers have adjusted to assist the students during these times. (Bao, 2020; Bennett, 2021; Pandya et al., 2021). The evidence supports that operant/instructivism learning, social learning theory, and constructivist theory have changed as students were forced to learn remotely and adjust to technology as a primary tool and partial replacement for classroom teaching methods (Bandura, 1977; Çebi & Güyer, 2020; Crompton et al., 2021; Rapanta et al., 2020). This change in strategy incorporated ideas and concepts of connectivism using technology to learn (Bell, 2009; Dunaway, 2011; Siemens, 2005).

The initial information from studies during recent times of uncertainty shows that there has been some adjustment to alternative teaching strategies and that educators had to change their methods to engage students and motivate them to continue their educational growth. (Bennett, 2021; Bao, 2020; Pandya et al., 2021). Traditional teaching strategies were too viable during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, sitting with students became communicating

through a virtual program, and the ability to work in the same environment was gone. Teaching practices in the past for those working in residential settings did not have to encounter that previously, resulting in a radical shift in teaching practices.

Newer research also provides some insight into the perspectives of both students and teachers during these times and the importance of understanding how their experiences changed them and how it influences teaching and learning (Beardsley et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021; Sumartono et al., 2021). The transition from residential learning to remote teaching and then back to an institutional setting affected teachers and students throughout the process (Chen et al., 2022; Means & Neisler, 2021). Their perspectives on these changes provide insight into the preparedness to adjust to times of uncertainty and the views of those participating in education during changes and threats to education.

Students and Educators' Perspectives During Times of Uncertainty

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers made strategy changes to assist students with their educational needs since this was one example of a significant time of uncertainty in education (Anderson & Hira, 2020; Lambert et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). This included teaching students how to learn from websites and online technology instead of classroom learning (Crompton et al., 2021). It also changed interaction techniques using video camera technology to meet virtually as a class instead of in person. Those changes resulted in student perspectives and motivational techniques adapting to new environments and different social interactions. (Agung et al., 2020; Lixiang et al., 2021). The data from students report changes in motivation and perceptions and adaptations to physical experiences and mental health of both students and teachers (Beardsley et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Pressley, 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021).

Overall, evidence supports increased mental health problems among both educators and students, and motivation and perception of education strategies and processes changed during the pandemic too (Beardsley et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Pressley, 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). Increased mental health symptoms were reported, and motivation by students and teachers wavered as remote learning continued throughout the pandemic (Kim et al., 2021). The lack of physical interaction between students and educators did cause motivational issues as remote learning did not provide proximity within an environment to work together, collaborate, and create sustained positive interactions.

Research showed before the COVID-19 pandemic that changes in the environment and social interactions and the use of modern technology as a primary learning tool do influence the motivation and mental health of students and educators (Lacomba-Trejo et al., 2022; Onyesolu et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2023). The results of limited physical interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic within institutional settings caused perceptions of less valuable learning and a decrease in overall motivation to continue with schooling and education by teachers and students, as prior students reported (Beardsley et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Pressley, 2021; Sharma & Alvi, 2021).

Research also supports that the lack of physical interaction and the stress of the new environments and learning practices did cause mental fatigue for both the students and educators (Lacomba-Trejo et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023). Students, particularly educators, did not perceive themselves as prepared to manage these changes externally and internally, and the underrepresentation of preparedness by the institutions to prepare educators for times of uncertainty caused a significant problem for their faculty (Lacomba-Trejo et al., 2022; Xu et al.,

2023). This research supports the need for further development on the underrepresentation of residential faculty members' preparedness during times of uncertainty.

Summary

This chapter continued a full literature review to investigate the problem of times of uncertainty preparedness in residential college planning being underrepresented from educators' perspectives. The literature review discussed current data and analysis on educator preparedness throughout different institutional settings during times of uncertainty. The early sections of the literature review included the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). After discussing social cognitive theory, the next section of the literature review included a historical background on learning, behavior, and social interaction theories. The remaining sections of the literature reviewed multiple studies on past and current education practices during times of uncertainty. These sections contained the roles of administrative leadership, teacher training, and historical methods of preparing for times of uncertainty. The literature review concluded with research involving educational changes and teaching practices during more recent times of uncertainty.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. This chapter includes the research questions and the description of the setting and participants in the study. Following the setting and participants' descriptions, chapter three continues with the researcher's positionality, followed by the study's procedures, data collection plan, and data analysis plan. The chapter concludes by discussing the study's trustworthiness and any ethical considerations.

Research Design

A qualitative method provides information about new phenomena and assists in learning about possible new change models (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kegler et al., 2018). A phenomenon occurs in the environment, and researchers employ phenomenological research to study that experience to provide understanding (Husserl, 1931). A phenomenological qualitative approach was appropriate to describe the experiences for this study (Moustakas, 1994; Tomaszewski et al., 2020) to understand the phenomena of underrepresented preparedness for times of uncertainty by residential faculties towards their educators.

One of the primary fields of phenomenological research is describing and understanding educational experiences (Gugutzer, 2020; Husserl, 1931). The research design provides the ability to gain insight through interviews, focus groups, and reflection on experiences from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). While there are multiple approaches to phenomenology, the transcendental phenomenological approach was the most appropriate method for describing instead of interpreting experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Husserl, 1931;

Moustakas, 1994).

The transcendental approach uses data collection and the process of bracketing to reduce bias and judgment while understanding the lived experiences of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). This research studied people and their experiences in the natural world without bias from the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout this study, using the transcendental phenomenology approach procedures designed by Moustakas (1994) guided the researcher to describe the lived experiences of educators with little or no training and support from administrations in residential facilities during times of uncertainty.

Research Questions

This section includes the central research questions and sub-questions that educators answered to support the problem statement. The problem was that preparedness for times of uncertainty is underrepresented in residential college planning (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al., 2021; Pattison et al., 2021). The questions each addressed an aspect of the problem and provided insight from the educators' perspectives that experienced the phenomenon.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question One

What are the expectations for residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question Two

How does the self-efficacy of residential college faculty affect the preparations for times of uncertainty?

Sub-Question Three

What are the community access experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty?

Setting and Participants

The proceeding section provided the setting for the study with the participants. The subsequent section includes the information or profile of the participants themselves. The study was conducted in New York State, and the participants were faculty members of universities who taught in a classroom environment.

Setting

The research for this study was in upstate New York State, meaning institutions not located in New York City that provided classroom or residential education. New York State consisted of 418 colleges and universities. Of those colleges and universities, 107 were public, and 311 were private schools (UnivStats, 2023). Of those colleges and universities, 169 offered dorms and full-time enrollment. On average, 11% of all colleges were online or virtual only. Therefore, the estimated number of colleges and universities that offered some form of in-classroom education was 372 institutions (UnivStats, 2023).

Universities and college faculty must have worked at least one course in an institutional campus classroom setting within five years before the study. The study only included schools with one or more active campuses in New York State for the previous five years. New York State colleges and universities were chosen as the setting due to the availability of the faculty

members and the accessibility of the universities themselves. The study was conducted virtually using the Zoom virtual platform.

Participants

The participants in this study were fourteen faculty employed by NY State institutions. All the participants in the survey taught at least one course at their institution in a classroom setting within five years from the beginning of the study. No faculty exclusively teaching or teaching virtual classrooms participated in the study. The participants also taught in a residential institution in New York State. Certain universities offered campuses outside of New York State, but only participants at New York campuses met the criteria for the study. The participants in the study ranged from 21 to 65 years of age and included faculty from multiple genders.

Recruitment Plan

This study included faculty employed in the state of New York at residential institutions. Participants were recruited using snowball and criterion sampling to ensure that participants understood the phenomenon while opening the study to various faculty members. To find participants, I notified them through email addresses obtained through university faculty websites and Facebook messaging provided for public access to reach out to all educators without prior permission from the institutions (see Appendix B). After one week, I sent a follow-up email to the potential participants to obtain their interest in the study and set up a time for interviews (see Appendix C). After I received interest from participants and scheduled an interview, I emailed them a consent form to complete before the interviews and focus group (see Appendix D).

Researcher's Positionality

The motivation for my interest in this study was my previous lived experiences of having

to perform my duties despite training and instruction from my institution's leadership during times of uncertainty in my current government employment. After experiencing the shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic and the return to work, along with my previous experiences of uncertainty in my workplace environment, including safety issues, my motivation was to learn about the lived experiences of residential faculty in times of uncertainty. While my experiences as the researcher influenced my understanding of the participants' experiences, my recognition and limited knowledge of the educational setting provided an opportunity to learn what other professionals' different professions experienced regarding the underrepresentation of leadership and support during times of uncertainty. Therefore, to conduct this study, I used a social constructivism approach interpretive framework, and this section describes that framework along with the three philosophical assumptions supporting the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interpretive Framework

The reason for using a social constructivist framework is because this framework addresses a phenomenon through a phenomenological study, recognizing that experiences create meaning, and researchers should describe and interpret those experiences (Chuang, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructivism is beneficial to use during phenomenological research because the history of this type of research involves using observation experiences to observe learning and interactions between humans and their perceived environments (Bandura, 1986; Gugutzer, 2020). Using observations to describe an event or phenomenon became one of the primary methods to obtain new, qualitative data for research to attempt to understand situations, scenarios, and even decision-making (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Many researchers use the frameworks created by Moustakas (1994) to perform studies across different interests of study to enhance knowledge from the experiences of people who

participated in or witnessed phenomena. I chose the transcendental phenomenology approach to guide my research.

The research used a social constructivist paradigm with a transcendental phenomenology research design to describe and understand the lived experiences of residential New York State college and university faculty members (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The framework was conservative but focused on describing those observations with participants and environments in the world despite my firsthand experiences with times of uncertainty in a different field of employment. Using the social constructivist framework or paradigm allowed me to research objectively, code, and analyze based on my understanding of the topic. However, it also permitted my research method to occur despite the lack of personal knowledge in an educational setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Abiding by this interpretative framework throughout the study guided the overall research during all phases of the study, including interviews, document analysis, and observations of the participants in the study.

Philosophical Assumptions

My philosophical assumptions provided value to the purpose and direction of the future study. My assumptions were my positions, and they gave a background behind the focus of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cuthbertson & Blair, 2020). As a researcher, I have specific worldviews and experiences associated with my personal and professional life that influenced my study. It was essential to address and accept them during my research study. The specific areas of my assumptions are ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological is the researcher's perceptions of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the study, the perceptions of faculty members of residential institutions being unprepared or trained

by the administration during times of uncertainty influenced my assumptions. My ontological assumption was that humans perceive experiences differently, and how people describe and interpret those experiences does not always coincide from person to person (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The result was that assumptions about described experiences differed and may not have the same meaning from one perspective to the next, and they were based on my point of view. While there are different methods to interpret a described experience by a researcher, and the truth is based on a higher power, my overall biases could have caused different variations of the duplicate defined accounts.

Epistemological Assumption

Similarly, epistemological assumptions go beyond the view of reality to what the researcher knows about reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher, I recognized that while perspectives differ, that does not take away the value of listening and describing the faculty members' experiences. As a phenomenological research designer, one of my goals in my study was to remain unbiased from the participants' and researcher's perspectives. By maintaining my impartial perspective for the study, I provided the truth of the events to guide future studies. While I had opinions from firsthand experiences on the subject in a different career field, those individual experiences differed from those involved in the study, and the data guided the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Axiological Assumption

As stated, I had prior experiences with leadership undersupporting me during times of uncertainty in government settings, and those experiences brought value to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, I did not have experience as an educator, but I have experienced both living through times of change and working in situations without support from leadership.

Therefore, reflecting on my axiology of times of uncertainty and leadership, I understood some of the perspectives of the participants working during times of uncertainty. Fortunately, with limited knowledge from the educator's perspective, the axiological assumptions ensured the participants' insight provided added information. Participants provided greater insight into the underrepresentation of leadership and support for residential faculty members during times of uncertainty (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher's Role

Using my understanding of a transcendental phenomenological design, my role as the researcher was to listen, interview, describe, and code data regarding residential faculty members being underrepresented during times of uncertainty as the human instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I had no relationships with any participants in the study. While there may have been some prior knowledge of specific educational institutions, I did not have authority over anyone in those institutions, and the participants had no obligation to provide any information to me. I chose a qualitative research design to study the phenomenon only, not to make assumptions or input known knowledge on any aspect of the data collection and analysis.

Additionally, I used the known assumptions to guide the interpretation of the research while remaining objective to the experiences provided by the faculty members (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since I had no background in working in education and have never been employed in any field of education, there were no concerns about influence or power over any participants in the study. Finally, I had never participated in any studies regarding leadership education, had never collaborated with educators in any capacity, and had limited experiences with plans and policies of residential institutions during times of uncertainty.

Procedures

The following section provides the steps I used to complete this study. It also includes the approval documentation required to perform the research, beginning with the institutional review board's (IRB's) approval. The section contains the data collection process, my analysis plan, and details to ensure the study achieved triangulation. The section concludes with documents supporting the IRB's approval and permissions to complete the study.

Data Collection Plan

During this study, I used three methods to collect data. The first was individual interviews with fourteen faculty members of residential institutions within New York State. Following the interviews, the second data collection method was a focus group with three faculty members. The third data collection method was document analysis through stories and reflection letters from five faculty members. I used theories and instructions from both Creswell and Poth (2018) and Moustakas (1994) as a guide to complete the study.

Individual Interviews

The first data collection method was individual interviews with faculty members in residential institutions in New York State who had taught at least one course in a classroom setting in the five years before the study. The purpose of using interviews was to explore the participants' lived experiences through direct interaction with the educators who work with student learning (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Using this data collection method was justifiable as interviews are one of the primary research methods to explore and attempt to understand a phenomenon involving experiences with humans (Moustakas, 1994). Interviews with the faculty members provided detailed accounts of experiences during times of uncertainty in classroom settings, the role of leadership during those times, and insights about their overall

experiences from a direct perspective.

The interviews consisted of 13 open-ended questions to generate details from the faculty members' experiences during times of uncertainty and their interactions with leadership and institutions or colleges. I had each participant agree to the consent form before the interviews (see Appendix D). I requested to audio and video-record the interviews so that I could listen to, reflect on, transcribe, and replay the participants' responses to ensure accuracy. The audio and video recording allowed their full participation to be recorded to capture the participants' lived experiences as they perceived them. The interviews occurred through the Zoom virtual meeting platforms with the option for both audio and video conferences to provide the ability to quickly expand on the questions as warranted and prevent any communication or clarification issues that may arise. All interviews occurred virtually at my home and at a location chosen by each participant to allow privacy during the interview for confidential, honest dialog without the possibility of others involved with the institutions overhearing or interrupting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interview time I allotted was one hour, but the option to continue beyond that hour was available. Below are the interview questions I asked the participants.

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and career working in New York State institutions or colleges. CRQ
2. Please describe what times of uncertainty (situations that caused you to change how you taught students) you experienced while teaching in a classroom environment. CRQ
3. What interactions did you have with the institutional leadership or administration before the times of uncertainty regarding dealing with those situations? CRQ

4. What training did your administration provide to adapt to times of uncertainty before they occurred? SQ1
5. How would you describe your interactions with the institution during times of uncertainty? SQ1
6. What expectations did you have regarding ongoing communication with the institution, preparing for times of uncertainty? SQ1
7. How prepared did you feel to adapt to times of uncertainty? SQ2
8. What effect did your preparation have on working with the students during times of uncertainty? SQ2
9. What steps did you take to prepare for times of uncertainty? SQ2
10. Besides institutional or administrative interactions, what access did you have to other supports to prepare for times of uncertainty? SQ3
11. Describe your interactions with anyone outside the institution, such as in the community, about methods to prepare for times of uncertainty. SQ3
12. Overall, how prepared did you feel for times of uncertainty between the interactions with your institution and the community? CRQ
13. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experiences with your preparedness to adjust to times of uncertainty in the classroom? CRQ

The purpose of asking these thirteen questions was to obtain clarification on the central research question and the sub-questions. This central research supports questions centered around the social cognitive theory framework and gathers overall perspectives of the phenomenon (Bandura, 1986; Moustakas, 1994). The sub-questions and supporting questions in

this table provided in-depth clarification and descriptions of events and perspectives during the phenomenon, creating valuable data to describe and explain what occurred.

Focus Groups

The second data collection method I used in the study was a focus group. This focus group occurred after the individual interviews, and all the participants from the interviews were invited to attend the focus group. The reason for the focus group was to engage the participants through peer-to-peer conversations, allowing the participants to discover different interpretations of their experiences through dialogue with each other and provide any shared ideas on working with administration during times of uncertainty (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The focus group was conducted through the Zoom virtual platform and lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Participants could choose their location for the focus group, and I ensured privacy by conducting the focus group from my home. The participants signed a consent form to participate in the focus group (see Appendix D). I video and audio recorded the meeting for data analysis and reflection (Moustakas, 1994). I then began by describing the focus group's purpose and reading the first focus group question to engage the participants (Moustakas, 1994). During the question process, I allowed each participant opportunities to engage others and share their experiences during times of uncertainty while teaching courses in a classroom setting.

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. Describe a time of uncertainty that impacted your ability to perform your usual schedule inside a classroom. CRQ
2. What expectations did you have from your administration or institution to adjust to times

of uncertainty such as the ones you described? SQ1

3. How prepared did you feel when that time of uncertainty occurred? SQ2
4. Did any others, such as peers or people/agencies outside the facility, provide guidance to prepare for times of uncertainty? S3
5. Overall, reflecting on your experiences, how prepared do you feel for the next time of uncertainty and what could your leadership provide to ensure your preparedness? CRQ

The purpose of asking these focus questions was to obtain clarification on the central research question and the sub-questions and expand on those questions from the interviews. These questions centered around the framework of social cognitive theory and gathered overall perspectives of the phenomenon; however, these were done in a group environment to provide additional insights from the participants through discussing their experiences (Bandura, 1986; Moustakas, 1994). These extra questions from the focus group continued to provide in-depth clarification and descriptions of events and perspectives during the phenomenon, creating valuable data to describe and explain what occurred, along with bringing new descriptions to the data and the interview answers.

Letter Writing

While there are many forms of written analysis in data collection, I used letter writing to describe and understand the phenomenon of the study better (Bowen, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). Through self-reflection, letter writing aimed to gain insight into perspectives (Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2020). The ability to re-examine the data gathered from participant experiences through letter writing was a unique way to obtain additional information not conveyed in the interviews or focus groups (Patton, 2015). I reached out to the participants in the interviews and focus groups to write a letter to administrators at institutions about their

experiences with preparedness and what strategies were successful. The goal of the letters was to provide administrators at institutions insight into the lived experiences of faculty and to describe the phenomenon of underrepresentation during times of uncertainty.

Table 3

Letter Writing Prompts

1. Describe your perception of preparedness during times of uncertainty.
2. What strategies did you use to prepare for times of uncertainty that were successful?
3. What strategies did you use to prepare for times of uncertainty that were unsuccessful?
4. Based on your experiences and the strategies you used during times of uncertainty, what advice or recommendations would you have for administrators and institutions in other colleges?

The lettering-writing questions aim to triangulate the data collected within this study. Each question was strategically designed to add depth and breadth to the investigation of residential college faculty preparing for times of uncertainty. In addition, by triangulating the data, I validated my findings, exposed non-themes, and unbiasedly guided my interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

After I completed the data collection, I began the data analysis plan. The below section includes the analysis plan for each time of data collection method and the synthesis of the data into one collaborative set of data. The chapter concludes with my trustworthiness as the researcher, the ethical considerations, the permissions I used for the participants, and approval from Liberty University.

The data analysis approach was based on the methods proposed by Moustakas (1994) for

analyzing interviews. Moustakas included multiple steps in data analysis of interviews, including utilizing epoché, reduction, imaginative variation, and textural and structural descriptions. Before beginning the data collection, I suspended my judgment about the information I received . I employed epoché as my guide to describe and interpret the participants' experiences. Once I suspended judgment, I could focus on the interviews themselves.

Once I completed the interviews, I used reduction, specifically phenomenological reduction, to review the data objectively and without bias (Moustakas, 1994). I confirmed the removal of my biases by having the participants review my transcriptions to check for errors or misrepresentations . From my data review, I described the experiences presented to me through textural and structural descriptions . The textural descriptions described how the participants explained their perceptions of the phenomenon, and I was able to use themes and coding to analyze them. After using the textual description approach, I worked with Moustakas') guide for imaginative variation to create structural descriptions. Combining the textural descriptions and imaginative variation provided insight into the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Upon creating the textual and structural descriptions, I hoped to discover some of the meanings of the experiences regarding the underrepresentation of residential faculty members during times of uncertainty. To achieve the purposes or essence of the experiences, I used bracketing along with the methods provided to obtain the results and kept a journal to analyze and reflect on my thoughts and emotions .

I analyzed the focus group experiences and information using the same methods as the individual interview analysis plan. Using epoché to remove bias, I followed the steps of Moustakas (1994) by starting with reduction, member checking, and then textural descriptions. After reviewing and reflecting on the textural descriptions, I employed imaginative variation and

created structural descriptions). I then combined the textural and structural descriptions to develop the essence or meaning of the collaborative focus group experiences about their perceptions of underrepresentation by the administration of residential institutions during times of uncertainty).

Once I received the letters from the participants, I followed the same data analysis format as the interviews and focus groups. I began with epoché and phenomenological reduction to remove bias and build a data analysis structure (Moustakas, 1994). To obtain textural descriptions from the letters, I used memos to identify similar experiences that the participants described in the letters. Then, I continued with the imaginative variation stage, creating structural descriptions and combining those with textural descriptions to develop shared perceptions of the experiences of the phenomenon using coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

After I analyzed the three different data collections, the final component of the phenomenological research methods design was to complete triangulation, combining all the data into themes using coding (Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2009). I finished the coding using the step-by-step methods provided by Saldaña (2013). The first step was to code the data from interviews, the focus group, and letters). These single-coded pieces of data had sub-codes to create categories and sub-categories. The categories contained coding relevant to a topic from the primary and sub-questions and their supporting questions from the data collection methods. I then reflected on the categories and how they apply to my research questions, as well as the purpose and the problem. I created themes or concepts to describe the participant's perspectives in each category. Finally, I created themes, assertions, and explanations about the participants' experiences from the themes and applied them to new knowledge on my topic.

Those themes provided the basis for describing and answering the research question.

Using bracketing to remove my personal bias, I reflected on the themes and separated more prominent represented themes with sub-themes through horizontalization and synthesis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By giving equal value to the statements and creating both themes and sub-themes, I gave meaning to the phenomenon of underrepresentation of residential faculty members by administrations in institutions based on the synthesis of the data provided by the research. Overall, the collection, analysis, and descriptions offered unique experiences of the phenomenon while allowing future research to replicate and expand on the information for educators preparing for times of uncertainty.

Trustworthiness

The study of residential educators being overlooked for training and support during times of uncertainty included qualitative research, including interviews, a focus group, and document analysis. The study's foundation relied on the trustworthiness of the research and methods to bring value to the data, the coding procedure, and any conclusions from the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The components of a trustworthy study include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All those components were present in this study, along with ethical considerations.

Credibility

To determine credibility, Bryman and Lilley (2016) created different study components that combine to provide evidence of the value and acceptability of the data and the research. This study used three components: triangulation, persistent observation, and prolonged engagement. Triangulation provided a connection between the data, while persistent observation and prolonged engagement established the value of learning and understanding the participants in the

phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Combined, they completed the credibility portion of trustworthiness for the study.

Triangulation

For this study, the research consisted of data collection about the experiences of residential faculty members and their preparedness for times of uncertainty. Following the data collection methods, including interviews, a focus group, and letters, the type of triangulation for this study was method triangulation, using more than one method to collect data about the specific phenomenon (Bryman, 2016; Carter et al., 2014). I completed the triangulation of the study by including those interviews, the focus group, and the individual letters from the participants. Those three methods completed the triangulation for future studies.

Persistent Observation

The purpose of persistent observation is to create depth to a phenomenon to add valuable information about situations and scenarios (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study used persistent observation to increase trustworthiness because I observed the educators during their interviews and focus group interactions. The phenomenon occurs because of the underrepresentation during times of uncertainty, and the observations and focus group provided depth into the processes through their words and actions during the data collection.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement allows researchers to understand participants in multiple settings and build relationships through the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study had prolonged engagement built into the interview process, the focus group, and the individual letters about the phenomenon. The interviews included questions to learn about the participants and their unique experiences, and the future contact after the interviews allowed for additional relationships as a

group. Finally, the letters themselves allowed for personal reflection and future reference after the interviews and focus group by including new perceptions and experiences to present themselves. This provided the ability to study participants' experiences through multiple data collection methods and to develop an understanding of the social relationships in the phenomenon.

Transferability

Transferability is more substantial and valuable with larger samples and the ability to generalize phenomena throughout different environments (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study of residential educators in New York State institutions and colleges during times of uncertainty enhances the research for understanding faculty preparedness through detailed descriptions (Geertz, 2008). There is little research on the topic with New York State residential faculty members due to the recent rapid changes in education. This data establishes qualitative information from direct participants in the phenomenon that may be transferable once replicated in other environments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability is essential to repeat the study in other environments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since this study was detailed research on qualitative data during recent times of uncertainty in higher education, the researcher's notes and details about the method were sufficient to permit repeated experiments beyond New York State. The study followed specific procedures for qualitative research, and the entire process required committee review from Liberty University.

Confirmability

To establish the confirmability of the study, I maintained a detailed audit trail to establish transparency in the process, which removed my personal biases, motivations, and interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This included all data types, records, and reports used during information collection. Secondly, triangulation supported confirmability because of the multiple methods in the study, as described when describing the study's credibility. Finally, memoing during the coding process and between each data collection mode supported the reflexivity used throughout the process. This included experiences by the researchers and additional information added through observations and re-reviewing materials during the study. Those three methods, the audit trail, triangulation, and the use of reflexivity, supported the confirmability of the study.

Ethical Considerations

I considered all ethical concerns. Consent from Liberty University IRB (see Appendix A) and the study's participants provided the study's transparency. The consent from the educators also provided assurances of confidentiality and fair treatment of all participants (Ramsook, 2018). Every participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and could refuse to answer any questions they perceived as uncomfortable.

All data was and continues to be securely stored in locked cabinets and password-protected folders in a secure hard drive, where only I can access the records. After three years of postproduction of the final research report, I will destroy all records. The documents also contain educators' pseudonyms to prevent personal identification (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, risks were mitigated through data protection and anonymous protection of educators and schools. Therefore, the benefits of learning about the phenomenon outweighed any potential negative consequences of the study .

Permissions

Before conducting this study, I obtained permission from Liberty University to have the research approved by their IRB (see Appendix A). Once approved, I contacted faculty at upstate New York institutions and colleges through a recruitment email (see Appendix B). After one week, I sent a second follow-up email to obtain additional participants for the study (see Appendix C). I emailed each participant again to confirm they met the study requirements and schedule an interview. After confirming the participant's eligibility, I emailed the participants a consent form to complete before the interview (see Appendix D). Once the consent form was returned, I conducted the interviews and a focus group. Then, I documented the analysis in the form of a letter sent to each participant through email.

Other Participant Protections

Combined with the ethical considerations, ensuring the participants' protection was essential. Before each data collection method, I advised the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Additionally, no real names were present in the study, only participant pseudonyms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The names of the institutions were also left out of all data in the study. To ensure the data is kept confidential, all electronic recordings are secured in a locked computer at my location, and the notes and any other written materials are stored in a lock box at my location. After three years, I will destroy both the electronic information and the paper documents.

To mitigate the risks for the participants, I was the only reviewer of the data to minimize the chances of the institutions finding out that their faculty provided potentially negative feedback towards their methods. General locations do not appear in the data analysis; the institutions are only in New York State. Additionally, the virtual meetings are password-

protected and sent only to the participants to prevent others from hearing or seeing the interviews and focus groups. Finally, the letters were sent and returned electronically from a secure email on a secure, password-protected computer that only I could access during and after the study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. This chapter included the research questions and the description of the setting and participants in the study. Following the setting and participants' reports, I described my positionality as the researcher, along with the procedures and data collection plan employed in the study. The chapter concludes by discussing the study's trustworthiness and potential ethical concerns arising from the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. The chapter begins with participant demographics relevant to the study and an overview of each interview, highlighting the core themes and subthemes discovered by the faculty members. Based on the data collected, the subsequent portions of the chapter describe the results and emerging themes and sub-themes. The chapter concludes with specific answers to the study's research questions.

Participants

The study participants included 14 New York faculty members teaching at accredited universities. Each individual met the participant criteria for this study. Each participant taught a face-to-face course within the last five years. Faculty had at least five years of experience teaching within and outside New York State. Faculty teaching online or exclusively online were not eligible for this study. Participants held adjunct faculty, assistant professors, professors, or core faculty positions teaching in educational leadership, mathematics, nursing, psychology, physical therapy, engineering, chemistry, neuroscience, environmental studies, and biology, teaching undergraduates to graduates. Participants ranged in experience from five to more than 10 years and were 21 to 65, identifying from multiple genders. The table below offers detailed information about each participant faculty member using pseudonyms, including their position, department, student type, and current role experience.

Jessica

Jessica was an adjunct professor for six years at the time of the study. She worked part-

time with graduate students in the Department of Educational Leadership while working a separate professional career. The primary time of uncertainty in the six years of working at the university was the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, there were periods of weather-related closures causing loss of curriculum. Due partly to Jessica's professional career, she felt prepared because they could pre-record courses. She did "access the resources they provided us" but was "nervous about Zoom" when teaching virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jason

Jason worked as an assistant professor in mathematics for over 10 years. The assistant professor taught graduate and undergraduate students. Given the length of time at the university, he stated that there were multiple times of uncertainty, including safety issues, weather-related problems, building problems, and health concerns. The university provided some measures of preparedness but was not satisfactory overall. One example was a fire alarm that went out in the building during class, and Jason said, "We all went outside, and we were just standing there for 45 minutes, and nothing was communicated to us."

Susan

Susan was a full-time professor in the Department of Nursing for seven years, teaching undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Susan reported multiple times of uncertainty, including self-harm of students on campus, the COVID-19 pandemic, threats against faculty, and weather-related closures. Due to the nursing program's hands-on demands, it was impossible to lose curriculum, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the professors "had to make up for clinical time." That means making up clinical work and designing the courses to work virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic were revised at the department's discretion.

Mary

The fourth participant was Mary, who had spent over ten years as a professor of psychology at the time of the study. During that time, Mary taught graduate and undergraduate students, including large lecture-based classrooms. This participant described times of uncertainty in many areas, including the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, weather-related incidents, school violence, safety concerns, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Mary said most interactions were through the dean and the department. She stated that during times of uncertainty, she did not "remember the university paying attention [to displaced students and that] sometimes administration doesn't think about the consequences of the large classes."

Cindy

Cindy was a core faculty member who taught physical therapy courses to graduate and undergraduate students for five years. Like Participant Three, Cindy taught physical therapy courses that required extensive hands-on experience to complete course requirements. The department had to figure out what to do independently, and the administrators "didn't really care what we did [during the COVID-19 pandemic because] they had their hands full at a university level."

Erik

Erik was the second adjunct teacher interviewed in the study. He taught in the engineering department for eight years and primarily instructed undergraduate students. According to Erik, "there is no formal guidance" on handling canceled classes and lost time. The lack of formal guidance primarily included the COVID-19 pandemic and weather-related closures if they conflicted with the single-course night each week.

Steven

The seventh participant was Steven, who taught business and hospitality for at least 10 years during this study. The professor taught both graduate and undergraduate students and had multiple experiences with times of uncertainty. Before the ability to use technology, students "just missed a class and tried to make it up." Steven also noted that "current students have a COVID-19 hangover", which means they are not as prepared for college as prior students. Interestingly, the "COVID-19 hangover" arose several times among other participant experiences.

Shelley

Shelley, a full-time professor, was the eighth interviewee and the second individual working in psychology. Like Mary, Shelley had over 10 years of experience and worked with students of all levels at their university. Despite the similarities, the two participants did not work at the same upstate New York college. While there had been multiple times of uncertainty, COVID-19 caused the most lost curriculum time. In general, administrators did reach out to faculty in the sense that "we were given options of how to do things and we should choose what we wanted to do" regarding hybrid and remote learning during the pandemic. Shelley stated that, in uncertain times, she "had never seen a preparedness plan."

Amanda

Amanda was the first interviewee to work in the field of chemistry. As a full-time professor, she taught graduate and undergraduate students and had over 10 years of experience. During that time, there were multiple times of uncertainty with varying degrees of response from the administration. In one situation, there was a tragedy with a student on campus, and the administration provided limited information, placing the faculty in a difficult position. Amanda

shared, “When the student's death occurred, the university said we were not canceling classes, but we couldn’t teach new content, and that was super uncomfortable for us.”

Logan

The tenth participant was Logan, the third professor of mathematics who had taught at their university for more than 10 years. Logan taught primarily undergraduate students and expressed that when times of uncertainty occur, it causes problems because when you “cancel one class at a college level, it impacts the whole semester.” He also explained that there was a significant drop in student preparedness when students post-COVID-19 entered college. The professor stated, “The feeling in the classroom is that they literally have not had school for two years.” Regarding communication and feeling prepared during times of uncertainty, Logan believed the school was safe, but “with regards to COVID-19, I would say they did a horrible job.”

Amy

Interviewee eleven was Amy, and she was the first participant to work in neuroscience and pharmaceutical sciences as an assistant professor. Amy had worked for three years at the university and was hired just before the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to that, the COVID-19 pandemic was the only time of uncertainty experienced during her tenure. During that time of uncertainty, Amy stated, "I don’t think anyone could say they felt prepared, but I will say the support was there to help us” regarding the administration. Their department “heard from the dean pretty regularly, and of course, we had more contact with our peers.” Amy rated the administration’s communication at seven out of 10 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Veronica

Veronica also worked in the psychology department with undergraduates for over ten

years. While the administration was flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic, universities “are very slow reactive, and we don’t tend to prepare. Academia is slow to change.” Veronica rated the administration's preparedness during COVID-19 as seven out of 10 but stated, “There was more flexibility than we have now” and “There is less trust now” after the university removed the pandemic restrictions.

Bradley

The second to last interview was Bradley, an environmental studies professor with a background in archeology. Bradley worked with undergraduate students for six years at the time of the interview. He shared that one positive aspect of the administration at that university is that “individual professors have so much discretion.” In those six years, there were times of uncertainty beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, including violence and tragedy on campus and weather-related closures. The one negative that Bradley included was that new faculty may struggle because of the flexibility of professors because “the university is very bad at communicating about policies and procedures and expectations.”

Stacy

The final interviewee was Stacy, the first professor in the field of biology. She had over 10 years of experience and worked with all levels of students. Biology courses require hands-on practice like other fields; therefore, any course cancelations due to times of uncertainty cause problems for the curriculum. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became difficult to complete classes, and there was limited guidance from the administration. When asked if there was communication with the administration, Stacy answered, “Not really. The department chair was the one that made all the administrative decisions that we really needed.”

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Participant	Position	Department	Students	Current Role
Jessica	Adjunct	Ed. Leadership	Graduate	6 years
Jason	Asst. Professor	Mathematics	Mixed	>10 years
Susan	Professor	Nursing	Mixed	7 years
Mary	Professor	Psychology	Mixed	>10 years
Cindy	Core Faculty	Physical Therapy	Mixed	5 years
Erik	Adjunct	Engineering	Undergraduate	8 years
Steven	Professor	Bus. and Hospital.	Mixed	>10 years
Shelley	Professor	Psychology	Mixed	>10 years
Amanda	Professor	Chemistry	Mixed	>10 years
Logan	Professor	Mathematics	Undergraduate	>10 years
Amy	Asst. Professor	Neuroscience	Graduates	3 years
Veronica	Professor	Psychology	Undergraduate	>10 years
Bradley	Professor	Environ. Studies	Undergraduate	6 years
Stacy	Professor	Biology	Mixed	>10 years

Results

This section of the chapter describes the results of the data collection and analysis of this phenomenological study, which describes the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. I triangulated three data collection methods: individual interviews, a focus group, and reflection letters completed by

participants coding (Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2009). Through triangulation, the use of Saldaña's (2013) step-by-step coding procedures guided by the framework of Moustakas (1994) and theme creation by Creswell & Poth (2018) exposed the themes and subthemes discussed in this chapter. The results included three themes, each with multiple subthemes depicted in the table below.

Table 5

Themes & Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes		
COVID-19 Pandemic	Technology	Curriculum	Student Hangover
Department Roles	Re-design	Colleagues	Communication
Safety Concerns	Security	Emergency Plans	

COVID-19 Pandemic

All 14 participants considered the COVID-19 pandemic the most significant time of uncertainty, regardless of their time teaching in New York. Faculty members Jessica and Shelley commented in the focus group that COVID-19 arrived with little preparation**.** Specifically, Shelley said, "Older professors required major support and help." In a reflection letter, Erik stated, "I felt woefully unprepared for times of uncertainty now that I've had an opportunity to reflect on them**.**" Erik also wrote, "The primary source of uncertainty was the COVID-19 pandemic." Most, if not all, of the faculty did express concerns about transitioning to fully remote classrooms in such a short time; some were more prepared based on their knowledge of technology and the ability to adapt classrooms to fit the needs of the students. This theme includes three sub-themes: technology, curriculum, and student hangover.

Technology

All 14 participants in the study discussed the use of technology. There were mixed reports about the uncertainty in adapting to virtual classrooms. The two adjunct professors in the study shared that they had experience recording meetings and using technology from their other places of employment. However, Jessica said she was "nervous about Zoom." Stacy also explained, "[I] had never heard of Zoom" before being told they had to shut down their classroom. Ten out of the 14 faculty members reported that the university provided some technology equipment or guidance throughout the process. Jason stated that when they went remote, the university opened a spot to obtain equipment, and "it was like going to Best Buy™." Amanda also shared, "[The college administration] did provide us with Zoom, and they were very responsive." Amy also reported that the "school created an online task force [when the university was going full remote]." Overall, the participants reported different scenarios involving technology use. Still, many had to adjust their curriculum to adapt to remote learning, particularly in fields of study requiring hands-on course materials.

Curriculum

Participants in the study, specifically those who worked in nursing, physical therapy, chemistry, and biology, reported significant curriculum changes to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Susan taught nursing courses, and to complete course requirements with the students at home, the department had to create "make-shift pieces of equipment" each semester during the pandemic. Stacy explained that in biology, the courses required working outside with nature, and some students returned to the large cities that "had no backyards," which was an unanticipated challenge. Multiple faculty members continued to describe their experiences and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and some also included the most recent years after students

returned to classroom learning. A common topic discussed by several participants regarding the COVID-19 pandemic was the idea that students who finished their high school careers during quarantine were fatigued and unprepared for college.

Student Hangover

Steven, a long-term professor in the business and hospitality department, stated, “Current students have a COVID-19 hangover.” Logan noted that students who taught mathematics remotely for their junior and senior years were “unable to complete even basic math problems.” Three other faculty members indicated that incoming first-year students were academically weaker and less prepared for introductory courses after the pandemic than those from prior years. Two faculty members questioned if those students received any education during their junior and senior years of high school.

Department Roles

A second theme reported by at least 12 of the 14 participants was the departments' significant role during times of uncertainty. The involvement of leaders directly in the department was reported as substantial beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and other times of uncertainty, including violence and weather-related challenges. Mary stated that despite some communication from administrative channels during times of uncertainty, the “department chair and the dean jumped in [to handle situations].” During a tragedy at the university, Amanda explained that the administration allowed the department to cancel classes. Finally, Veronica reported, “The department handed out equipment to their faculty [not the administration when it came to needing anything to complete courses].” This theme includes three subthemes: redesign, colleagues, and communication.

Redesign

Multiple participants reported that during times of uncertainty, the departments work with their faculty to redesign coursework to meet the needs of the students. Cindy said, "[As a department], we decided to completely re-order our order of courses [during the COVID-19 pandemic]." During the focus group, Jessica shared, "The department level decided how to run classes." Veronica and Bradley described the flexibility given to the professors and the department when needed. Veronica shared that if the department wanted to make changes, it "often asked permission to do things if we thought it would work better, and it was approved" without administrative interference. Faculty member Amy also said, " [I] heard from the dean regularly [regarding course news and changes]."

Colleagues

Within the department were significant collaborative relationships between colleagues that supported the redesign of the coursework. Cindy said, "Colleagues were very supportive; we could call each other, and when someone figured out how to do something, they recorded it and sent it out to everyone." This type of contact with other professors was a common subtheme within the departments' roles. Logan reported, "100 percent of any constructive suggestions came from colleagues" when describing the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the participants in the study reported that colleagues were their primary source of communication during times of uncertainty, but the level of communication varied according to the university.

Communication

Some participants reported a lack of communication in the university during times of uncertainty. Jason described that when a fire alarm went off, the entire building stood outside, and "nothing was communicated to us." Cindy, Erik, Logan, and Stacy all shared that, at times,

there was little to no communication in times of uncertainty, even regarding how to make up for lost time when classes were canceled. Some reports, particularly from Jessica and Amy, included that communication during times of uncertainty was unacceptable throughout the administration chain of command. Most of the faculty members did not provide positive descriptions of communication from the universities, especially outside of the departments.

Safety Concerns

One unanticipated theme from the interviews was the general perception of safety on campus for the faculty. The most prominent example of safety concerns came from Susan during letter writing. Susan stated, "Regarding issues with an angry student who failed the program and held a few of us (faculty) responsible, I did not feel very safe or prepared in the building." During an incident where a student passed away, Amanda shared that reporting on safety issues is limited when deciding what to do in the classrooms, saying there needs to be "reasonable updates" to provide sufficient information. Some participants felt generally safe on campus during times of uncertainty. However, security and the lack of planning were reported concerns.

Security

Regarding the security on campus itself, both Jason and Susan reported concerns about the location of the security forces. Jason reported an incident with a stalker at one time. He was concerned because the security office "was located on the other side of campus," so the officers could not protect him if the situation turned violent. When Susan had the incident with the student who held the faculty responsible, they reported the same issue. She explained, "[There] should have been a security office in each building [instead of one central location]." In both instances, the faculty members reported that the lack of nearby security was an issue during these personal times of uncertainty that could impact their ability to teach courses.

Emergency and Preparedness Plans

Combined with safety and security concerns reports, participants reported a lack of written plans for emergencies and times of uncertainty. No participant reported ever reading a formal plan, and many reported being unaware if they existed. Shelley stated, “I have never seen a preparedness plan.” Bradley said the administration is “very bad at communicating about policies and procedures and expectations.” Specifically regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, Stacy said, “I do not think they had an emergency management plan in place” at the university. Finally, Erik included that “there is no formal guidance” regarding how to deal with times of uncertainty that require classes to be canceled and how to make up or adjust to the lost curriculum.

Research Question Responses

This study was developed using one central research question and three sub-questions to describe the preparations for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York in times of uncertainty. The findings yielded three themes, each with sub-themes uncovered in the data collected from individual interviews, a focus group, and letter writing. The development of such themes and sub-themes guided me to answer the study’s research questions.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty? Each participant in the study provided details of their times of uncertainty and their perception of preparedness during those events. The COVID-19 pandemic was the most discussed time of uncertainty. Still, others did include major weather-related incidents, a terror attack, violence on campuses, threats to others and threats to self by students, and building problems. As the times of uncertainty occurred, the participants reported mixed perceptions

regarding their general preparedness for times of uncertainty. Some participants reported feeling prepared in certain circumstances due to prior knowledge. When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, Jessica was “somewhat prepared” because they had “prerecorded materials” in the past. Erik had a similar situation, as their courses already had virtual components before switching to remote classrooms.

Beyond technical knowledge, most of the participants reported they felt unprepared by the administration when times of uncertainty occurred. Beyond having “never seen a preparedness plan,” Shelley stated, the participants did not report any prior training when times of uncertainty occurred. Even when times of uncertainty were occurring, there was limited assistance in preparing the faculty. Erik recalled, “There was never any let’s circle the wagons and talk about how we were going to proceed [regarding the current time of uncertainty].” Additionally, Faculty Member Three reported no preparation for “[making] up for clinical time,” which was mandatory to complete courses. Finally, Mary stated that the administration always considers how to prepare for all situations and that “sometimes administration does not think about the consequences of the large classes” that this professor taught.

Sub-Question One

What are the expectations for residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty? Responses to the faculty's expectations regarding the university and administrations preparing for times of uncertainty centered on guidance and communication. When times of uncertainty occurred, Logan stated, “There was no guidance; they basically threw it in our laps and told us to figure it out [regarding switching to remote learning].” University administrations typically leave decision-making and preparedness to the discretion of the departments and the professors. Amy said, “[I] wish the [university] president would make the decision for us

[regarding preparing for times of uncertainty and the consequences of decision-making]." Amanda also stated this expectation regarding allowing the professors to cancel classes or continue teaching but not teach new material after a student dies on campus. Amanda said, "[The inability to teach new course content] was super uncomfortable for us," and it would be expected that the administration would cancel classes given the time of uncertainty.

Sub-Question Two

How does the self-efficacy of residential college faculty affect the preparations for times of uncertainty? Many participants reported having at least some knowledge of new teaching techniques and technologies that allowed them to prepare for recent times of uncertainty. Some participants had taught for at least three years and had some experience with times of uncertainty in their history. When asked to describe how they prepared for times of uncertainty, Amy referenced the combined knowledge of department colleagues, and they would "try to find alternate strategies so the students got materials one way or the other." Even if the participants did not believe they already had all the knowledge to prepare for times of uncertainty, they used their departments and colleagues as resources. The participants shared that they took advantage of whatever resources were available. Jason and Logan used their knowledge to purchase the equipment they needed for remote learning before the official shutdown of universities. Self-efficacy was reported to play a role in at least some preparation for times of uncertainty.

Sub-Question Three

What are the community access experiences of residential college faculty in preparing for times of uncertainty? The participants reported limited community access experiences regarding preparing for times of uncertainty. Outside of some technology companies offering access to university programs after the COVID-19 pandemic began, participants stated that most of their

experiences with support and access came from their internal departments and colleagues. Erik noted this in his reflection letter, “My primary method of adapting to the uncertainty around going to remote learning was using online teaching forums such as Reddit’s r/professor subreddit.” This strategy was one example of a faculty member's access to a resource outside of their university to assist in preparing for times of uncertainty. A few other participants mentioned researching specific times of uncertainty on the internet and in forums for professors; however, there was no described directed community involvement.

Summary

Chapter Four provided the results from the individual interviews, a focus group, and reflection letters triangulated into themes and subthemes using research-provided theories and processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2009; Saldaña, 2013). The study's results yielded three themes: the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the departments in times of uncertainty, and the safety concerns of the institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic included three sub-themes: the use of technology, the effects on curriculum, and the student hangover. The role of the departments also included three sub-themes: the re-design of programs, colleague interactions, and overall communication. The final theme, safety concerns of the institution, contained security and emergency plans as its sub-themes. The findings associated with such themes and subthemes guided an answer to the central research questions and sub-questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. This chapter consists of five subsections that explore the research discussion. The discussion includes the interpretation of the findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This section examines the findings of my study, considering the themes that emerged from a hermeneutic data analysis. The presented findings have implications for policy and practice as well as theoretical and empirical implications. The limitations and delimitations are outlined, followed by recommendations for future research and the study's overall conclusion.

Summary of Thematic Findings

All thematic findings of this study resulted from individual interviews, a focus group, and voluntary reflection letters sent by the participants. Those three data collection methods completed a triangulation of data, resulting in the emergence of themes around the central and sub-questions for the research. The triangulation of the data included coding, categorizing, and reflection. The result was the development of three themes: the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the departments in times of uncertainty, and the safety concerns of the institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic included three sub-themes: the use of technology, the effects on curriculum, and the student hangover. The role of the departments also included three sub-themes: the re-design of programs, colleague interactions, and overall communication. The theme of the institution's

safety concerns contained security and emergency plans as its sub-themes.

Critical Discussion

The interpretations of the study findings result from the themes that emerged from the qualitative data. Three interpretations emerged from the data analysis and findings. The interpretations include administrative practices, university collaboration, and university preparedness. The three interpretations are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Administrative Practices

Colleges have education practices for all situations, including safety rules and procedures and times of uncertainty (Kater et al., 2022; Klinenberg & Startz, 2022; Palumbo & Manna, 2019). Times of uncertainty require an increase in the need for administrative response time and reaction to situations when safety is a primary concern during a time of uncertainty (Johnson, 2019; Minister, 2017). The concern is that times of uncertainty, like the COVID-19 pandemic, do not have specific guidelines and training for educators to proceed with teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). The lack of specific guidelines was the main factor reported by the participants regarding their preparedness for times of uncertainty. Everything from general safety to assisting students with COVID-19 burnout had little guidance and limited defined administrative practices to assist faculty in preparing for the reported times of uncertainty.

University Collaboration

Embedded throughout the themes is the reporting of collaboration at different university levels. Most faculty reported some level of communication and collaboration at the department and college levels. A few reported some level of collaboration from the administration level to varying degrees. Collaboration was needed to prepare for times of uncertainty to coincide with social interactions and building relationships (Bandura, 1986; Corbett & Spinello, 2020;

Sathiyaseelan, 2021). Building those relationships increases communication and allows faculty to prepare for making changes to adjust to times of uncertainty, including adapting to technology (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). Technology use was a subtheme during the COVID-19 pandemic, and multiple faculty members stated collaboration was essential to learning how to teach remotely.

University Preparedness

The third interpretation of the study was overall university preparedness, even beyond times of uncertainty. Research supports that most universities have basic emergency security and safety procedures (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016). All of the participants in the study did not report this to be the case universally. A major theme was the inconsistencies between universities with preparedness for safety and security situations. Additional preparedness perceptions at the university level included how administrators responded and planned for times of uncertainty. Universities are responsible for protecting their faculty by preparing them for times of uncertainty (Harris & Sass, 2011). Strong, positive leadership and proactive universities continue to prepare and improve faculty education and training as times of uncertainty occur to ensure the students' support from their teachers (Asiyai, 2020; Duong et al., 2019; Sathiyaseelan, 2021). University preparedness was not widely discussed in the findings. Instead, many participants shared a perception of a lack of guidance and training for times of uncertainty, from the COVID-19 pandemic to fire drills. The result is the combination of interpretations of university preparedness and collaboration combined with defined administrative practices factored into faculty preparedness during times of uncertainty and the subsequent implications.

Implications for Policy or Practice

After carefully reviewing the findings, implications for both policy and practice may

better prepare faculty for times of uncertainty in the future. The implications focus on improving administrative planning and actions to become more proactive and ensure faculty are prepared when a new time of uncertainty occurs. This section includes those implications for policy and practice within colleges and universities.

Implications for Policy

The primary implications for policy within colleges and institutions came from the safety theme. Based on the themes and sub-themes regarding the safety of institutions, there are possible policy implications that would redefine ensuring safety on college campuses. While some colleges may already have portions of safety procedures in place, universal policies about security location and evacuation plans may prevent some of the perceptions of faculty being unsafe on campus.

Security Locations. Some faculty members provided detailed examples of scenarios where safety was a potential concern due to the location of security on campus. Creating policies in colleges that require security forces to be located closer to populated areas or spread throughout the campus could have prevented these reported situations of faculty feeling unsafe. Despite campus designs being different throughout the colleges, it would still be reasonable to mandate that security forces be within reasonable distance of any location to assist when there are potential threats.

Evacuation Plans. It is reasonable to assume that most colleges have evacuation and communication plans when safety issues such as fire alarms and other emergencies occur. However, in at least two reports from the faculty, they had never received a copy of those plans and were unsure what to do in specific situations. Creating a universal policy to provide and enforce all types of emergency plans to faculty would effectively reduce insecurity during times

of uncertainty when safety may be an issue.

Implications for Practice

Communication and decision-making standards for administration were two practices documented as areas of concern in this study. Communication was prevalent in every interview at the department level but varied between administration and faculty. Decision-making was inconsistent by the administrators, sometimes making decisions after a time of uncertainty, other times leaving decisions entirely to the faculty, and once in a while providing no assistance in the decision-making process at all.

Administrative Communication. Very few of the 14 faculty members recalled substantial, direct communication with administrators during times of uncertainty. Most communication was done through general emails or disseminated through the departments, presumably from administrators. Based on the number of staff, having the administrators directly contact every faculty member is impractical. However, creating a practice of sending regular information about the general protocol to all employees is reasonable. The implications of this would be that communication would already be established during times of uncertainty, creating a connection between administration and faculty that could increase due to the nature of the situations to improve preparedness.

Administrative Decision-Making. Amanda described an experience involving a student tragedy. The administration prevented the faculty from deciding how to manage their courses without teaching new content. Logan reported that the administrators made very little decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet they became heavily involved in the decision-making process after the issues were resolved. There were no communicated decision-making processes by the administrators to justify those choices. Best practices for times of uncertainty

may reduce feelings of unpreparedness by the faculty and give them information about their options to teach their students best. College administrative communication consistency and leadership practices may imply that faculty feel supported and better equipped to handle future times of uncertainty.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

Empirical and theoretical implications for describing the preparations for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York in times of uncertainty are presented in this study. This section will review the study's empirical significance to the research. Additionally, this section will connect the research data and findings to the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

Empirical Implications

The empirical implications support the social cognitive theory connectivity framework to others in an environment to learn and develop new knowledge (Bandura, 1986). In particular, this research studied the connections between faculty on preparedness, teaching, leadership, and even training during uncertain times to continue teaching students. Prior research supported that times of uncertainty include violence, natural disasters, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic (Li & Eryong, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020; Sharma & Alvi, 2021). Exploring the lived experiences of educators working in residential settings makes new perspectives on times of uncertainty possible in different educational settings (Li & Eryong, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020; Sharma & Alvi, 2021).

In addition, the connections between the faculty with their settings and environments with their ability to prepare for times of uncertainty add to the body of knowledge. The study implies that the faculty's relationships with their departments, other colleagues, the technology

available, and the classroom settings created their preparedness, or lack thereof, in times of uncertainty. Some faculty members did have prior experiences, particularly with technology, that assisted in creating new knowledge, but the preparedness and success in dealing with times of uncertainty hinged on their connections to the social world. The overall implication is that the environment and connections in society empirically significantly affect faculty preparedness in colleges in upstate New York in times of uncertainty.

Theoretical Implications

The study's guiding theory was social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory supports the connection between the social environment and the influences of that environment on people, which then dictates behavior, including learning (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). This theory was used to explore the administration's ability to obtain new, detailed, qualitative, and current information regarding educators' perceived preparedness and adaptability to their educational practices in modern society (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Minkos & Gelbar, 2020; O'Leary et al.; Pattison et al., 2021; Retuzel & Fawson, 2021).

The findings from this study aligned with the social cognitive theory framework (Bandura, 1986). All participants described their perceptions of preparedness for times of uncertainty through the scope of their environment, including engagement with social interactions. Multiple faculty members reported being more prepared due to their social interactions with others and their environments in and throughout their departments. The faculty who reported they were the least prepared did not have significant social contact and had limited interactions with their educational environment. Almost half of the faculty reported being on spring break during the COVID-19 pandemic. They could not return to the college environment and felt less prepared for that time of uncertainty. Ultimately, the theoretical implications support

the idea that the social environment supports faculty learning and preparedness during times of uncertainty.

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to the potential scope and size involved in exploring lived experiences during times of uncertainty, I had to limit the number of participants and the locations to complete the research. To focus my research, I had to make decisions about the number of participants and the amount of time spent obtaining data. Therefore, those decisions and other factors beyond my control caused the study's limitations and delimitations.

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study resulted from the size of the sample and the limited amount of potential diversity in their professions and locations. The study included only 14 participants, even though many other potential participants were inside and outside New York State. The participants also did not encompass the entire state, as the New York City region had no representation in the study. Despite attempts to recruit from locations throughout Upstate New York, some participants were from the same areas and universities, further limiting the number of locations in the study. Overall, the lack of participant variety was a limitation of the study. Additionally, only some faculty types participated, and not all faculty ages had representations, causing a restriction on how much the data could be generalized to all faculty in Upstate New York.

Delimitations

The study included intentional delimitations due to the desired region of the study. The purpose of the study was to obtain qualitative data from faculty only in Upstate New York. This excluded New York City and every other location outside New York State. The study also

excluded any teachers who taught solely remote courses to study the preparedness of faculty that had to adjust in-person classes due to times of uncertainty. Finally, within the research itself, virtual conferences were the primary means of communication, limiting the ability to have face-to-face contact and more personal discussions on the topic with the participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. However, future research could consider expanding the geographic location, examining other specific times of uncertainty, and developing a quantitative survey to explore additional aspects of participant perceptions. First, future research could expand beyond upstate New York and include colleges from New York City and outside the State. The expansion could allow for additional perspectives from a larger faculty population, comparing the perspectives and themes uncovered in this study. Second, future research could expand to focus on specific times of uncertainty. Since many participants spoke about their uncertainty during the pandemic as their primary time of uncertainty, a study exploring other areas of uncertainty, such as safety or security, may further add to the body of knowledge. Third, future research could develop a quantitative survey to add to the findings of this study, gaining a numeric perspective that guides a comparison of themes, allows for the consideration of patterns, and obtains stronger generalizability.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York. Fourteen faculty at residential colleges in upstate New York participated in the study. The study

included individual interviews, a focus group, and reflection letters submitted by the participants. Using triangulation of those data collection methods, themes and subthemes emerged from the qualitative data. The themes were the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the departments in times of uncertainty, and the safety concerns of the institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic included three sub-themes: the use of technology, the effects on curriculum, and the student hangover. The role of the departments also included three sub-themes: the re-design of programs, colleague interactions, and overall communication. The theme of the institution's safety concerns contained security and emergency plans as its sub-themes. The themes aligned with the empirical and theoretical framework guided by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Significant interpretations obtained from the findings were administrative practices during times of uncertainty, university collaboration, and university preparedness. Those interpretations during times of uncertainty had implications for policy with safety and practice with administrative communication and decision-making. The implications provided recommendations for future research, including expanding this study beyond the geographic area, exploring other specific times of uncertainty, and developing a quantitative perspective. Such recommendations may provide additional insight, allowing faculty to better prepare for times of uncertainty.

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Appendix A

IRB Application

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 31, 2024

Daniel Soltis
Heather Strafaccia

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-551 THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESIDENTIAL FACULTY PREPARING FOR TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY IN UPSTATE NEW YORK COLLEGES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Daniel Soltis, Heather Strafaccia,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration: Educational Leadership. The purpose of my research is to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York., and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be, or were, faculty members of residential institutions or colleges in New York State that have taught at least one college course in a classroom on a New York State campus within the past five years. Participants will be asked to complete a virtual individual interview, take part in a virtual focus group, and complete a follow-up reflection letter through e-mail. It should take approximately two hours to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria one week before the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Daniel Soltis
Doctor of Higher Education Administration candidate at Liberty University
[redacted]

Appendix C

Recruitment Follow-up Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration: Educational Leadership. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to contact me if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is one week from receipt of this follow-up email.

Participants must be, or were, faculty members of residential institutions or colleges in New York State that have taught at least one college course in a classroom on a New York State campus within the past five years. Participants will be asked to complete a virtual individual interview, take part in a virtual focus group, and complete a follow-up reflection letter through e-mail. It should take approximately two hours to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria one week before the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Daniel Soltis
Doctor of Higher Education Administration candidate at Liberty University

Appendix D

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Times of uncertainty in residential college planning: Underrepresented faculty preparedness by institutions

Principal Investigator: Daniel Soltis, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be, or were, faculty members of residential institutions or colleges in New York State that have taught at least one college course in a classroom on a New York State campus within the past five years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to describe the preparations for times of uncertainty for residential college faculty at higher education institutions in upstate New York.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a virtual, audio-recorded interview that will take no more than 1 hour.
2. Participate in a virtual, audio-recorded focus group with other participants that will take no more than 1 hour.
3. Complete and send a reflection letter to administrators at New York institutions about your experiences and what strategies were successful during times of uncertainty. This will take no more than 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Benefits to society include new insight into methods to prepare faculty members in residential institutions for future times of uncertainty.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher[s] will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years then deleted. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Daniel Soltis. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Heather Strafaccia, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and career working in New York State institutions or colleges. CRQ
2. Please describe what times of uncertainty (situations that caused you to change how you taught students) you experienced while teaching in a classroom environment. CRQ
3. What interactions did you have with the institutional leadership or administration before the times of uncertainty regarding dealing with those situations? CRQ
4. What training did your administration provide to adapt to times of uncertainty before they occurred? SQ1
5. How would you describe your interactions with the institution during times of uncertainty? SQ1
6. What expectations did you have regarding ongoing communication with the institution, preparing for times of uncertainty? SQ1
7. How prepared did you feel to adapt to times of uncertainty? SQ2
8. What effect did your preparation have on working with the students during times of uncertainty? SQ2
9. What steps did you take to prepare for times of uncertainty? SQ2
10. Besides institutional or administrative interactions, what access did you have to other supports to prepare for times of uncertainty? SQ3
11. Describe your interactions with anyone outside the institution, such as in the community, about methods to prepare for times of uncertainty. SQ3

12. Overall, how prepared did you feel for times of uncertainty between the interactions with your institution and the community? CRQ
13. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experiences with your preparedness to adjust to times of uncertainty in the classroom? CRQ

Appendix F

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. Describe a time of uncertainty that impacted your ability to perform your usual schedule inside a classroom. CRQ
2. What expectations did you have from your administration or institution to adjust to times of uncertainty such as the ones you described? SQ1
3. How prepared did you feel when that time of uncertainty occurred? SQ2
4. Did any others, such as peers or people/agencies outside the facility, provide guidance to prepare for times of uncertainty? S3
5. Overall, reflecting on your experiences, how prepared do you feel for the next time of uncertainty and what could your leadership provide to ensure your preparedness? CRQ

Appendix G

Letter-Writing Prompts

Letter Writing Questions

1. Describe your perception of preparedness during times of uncertainty.
2. What strategies did you use to prepare for times of uncertainty that were successful?
3. What strategies did you use to prepare for times of uncertainty that were unsuccessful?
4. Based on your experiences and the strategies you used during times of uncertainty, what advice or recommendations would you have for administrators and institutions in other colleges?